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THE INDEPENDENT

3,048

FRIDAY 26 JULY 1996

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A rare national treasure in peril

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

Clare Short, one of the few outspoken, unpredictable people left at a senior level in British politics, was the main casualty of last night's Shadow Cabinet reshuffle. She was demoted from transport to overseas development - a job traditionally given to unfashionable women MPs such as Joan Lester and Ann Clywd.

Though not universally admired, Ms Short has stood out by saying in public things that she self-evidently believes - and it is for that precisely that she has been punished by Tony Blair.

She has called for a debate on the possible legalisation of cannabis. She has suggested that people on relatively high salaries, close to her own, ought to pay more tax. She compounded her crime by telling a journalist about the "Ring Tony at home" messages on her electronic pager which followed.

Only last weekend she annoyed his office with attacks on the obsession with tax cuts and low inflation, and the "myth of the happy family and the permanent marriage".

A courageous MP she had tried to undo the damage of years of criticism of Mr Blair. Earlier this year she generously conceded that an "upper-middle-class man" had not been her idea of who should be Labour leader, but that she had been



wrong: "It didn't work for me, but it works for the rest of the country."

Like another outspoken politician, John Prescott, Clare Short had carried out some of the dirtier jobs of party discipline for Tony Blair. But like Mr Prescott, she has struggled in recent days to avoid condemning strikers without seeming overtly disloyal to the Labour leader. She sealed her fate on the afternoon of the Shadow Cabinet elections when she walked out of a television interview sweetly refusing to answer a question about the Tube strike.

Middle England may be relieved. But if she is on the way out of the Labour leadership, British politics will be the poorer. There must be a place in national life for someone who says: "If I have to be calculating about what I say, I will cease to be a proper human being."

Shadow Cabinet in full, page 6



Workfare revolution to be costed by Major

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

John Major has agreed to an independent evaluation of a "right to work" scheme which its backers claim could put many hundreds of thousands back into jobs and save £5bn annually in public expenditure.

Under the scheme the jobs would be paid £3 an hour - perhaps less for the young - for useful work created by local authorities, voluntary organisations, environmental agencies and private industry. The idea bears some similarities to US-style workfare schemes, under which claimants can be forced to work for their benefits, or a sum just above.

The backers of the idea accept, however, that the number of jobs needed to cover the 2.2 million unemployed mean that the scheme would have to begin here on a voluntary basis.

The move was hailed as "a real breakthrough" yesterday by Frank Field, Labour chairman of the Commons Social Security Committee, who, with Sir Ralph Howell, the Tory backbencher, is co-sponsor of the "Right to Work" Bill which the Prime Minister has agreed to have costed.

Mr Major's agreement to the study follows a demand for one by 135 backbenchers across all three parties. The study should be completed in time for a second reading of Sir Ralph's Bill set for 15 October.

Downing Street yesterday stressed that its study of the idea was absolutely "without commitment".

Ministers - including those on the right - have remained firmly opposed to workfare, which effectively turns the state into the employer of last resort. That, ministers have argued, would distort the jobs market and put



people in non-subsidised low paid jobs out of work.

No 10 said yesterday: "All the Government's own investigations of Sir Ralph's scheme have concluded that it is unworkable." The Prime Minister, had, however, agreed that the Department for Education and Employment would commission an independent evaluation,

given Sir Ralph's refusal to accept the Government's judgement.

The idea received unanimous backing in March this year from the cross-party Commons Employment Committee which called for a pilot of the job subsidy and work experience idea "forthwith". The Government's brusque rejection of that pro-

duced an Early Day Motion demanding a study "to prove or disprove" whether Sir Ralph's scheme would save billions in public spending. It would, its backers claimed, "eliminate unemployment, increase human happiness and sense of worth and give everybody the opportunity to earn a living".

Those signing the motion included 80 Conservatives, among them ex-ministers such as John Birt and George Weldon, and ranging from Peter Bottomley on the left to John Carlisle on the right. Alex Carlile and five other Liberal Democrats backed the call as did 40 Labour MPs, stretching from Alice Mahon on the party's left to Greville Janner, the Employment Committee chairman, on the right.

Mr Field said yesterday: "This is a real breakthrough given that the Government to date has stone-walled over any

costings. It is equally important if you are looking at options which a Labour government might consider.

"Both Sir Ralph and I are confident that if the calculations are done fairly this will be shown to save money. It would not only allow large numbers of people to do useful work, but it will allow spouses in families to go back work as well, transforming people's lives."

At present, social security rules effectively force part-time workers to quit when the main breadwinner loses a job. The scheme would put benefit money into letting people work, while generating tax receipts and stimulating the economy, Mr Field said.

A successful scheme would eventually lead to compulsory workfare, he added, "but in the initial stages we will never have enough jobs for all the people who would volunteer".

A backstabber and composer of ephemeral music...

What the Master of the Queen's Music says about Benjamin Britten

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

The debate over whether the composer Benjamin Britten should be honoured with a statue in his Suffolk home town was reignited yesterday when Malcolm Williamson, Master of the Queen's Music, came out against the idea. "In my opinion, Britten's music is ephemeral. It will not last," he said.

Dr Williamson spoke out after it emerged on Wednesday that Aldeburgh town council had rejected a district council suggestion that a statue of Britten be erected in the town where he is buried and lived for 30 years.

"Elgar - a much greater composer - had to wait 50 years after his death for a statue to be put up to him in his home town of Worcester. I think it is eminently suitable to consider the amount to which Britten is already commemorated in Aldeburgh," he said.

Dr Williamson added that the composer's reputation was likely to come under increasing fire after having been protected for the two decades since his death by admirers such as Donald Mitchell, Britten's editor at Faber.

Humphrey Carpenter reported some of the truth in his 1992 biography which revealed that he kissed and cuddled boy singers - but only platonically.

"A huge amount of literature is coming out now, since Ben's death," Dr Williamson said. "The homosexual, paedophilia

thing is coming to fore and there's going to be a terrific swing against him. That's nothing to me - he was a friend, although an ambidextrous friend: a backstabber too."

"More and more facts are coming out about Britten and his dirty tricks and the fact that he spent the war in America to escape, while other people like Michael Tippett, who is a great composer and still with us, stayed here and went to prison as a conscientious objector."

Britten had fallen out with the novelist E M Forster after taking up his suggestion that he turn Crabbe's poem *Peter Grimes* into an opera, he added.

"The emphasis was all on wicked men and small boys. He was furious and never spoke to Ben for years."

The composer of *Noye's Flood* and *Billy Budd* had enormous charm, he went on. "But he was curiously schizophrenic. I knew him for 40 years. He was very good to me and exceedingly cruel ..."

"He nominated me to be Master of the Queen's music because he knew he was dying and couldn't do it himself. I have great gratitude for him, but he was terribly double, as the French would say."

"There is a backlash. People are coming out, like me, and suddenly getting the courage to speak. It's now 20 years since Ben died and I did the BBC TV obituaries and the World Service obituaries of him and I had to steel my teeth not to say anything out of order."

QUICKLY

Coup in Burundi
There were chaotic scenes in Burundi yesterday in the wake of a military coup. Page 11

British Gas £1bn writ
British Gas revealed that it has issued a writ against the DTI to claim back £1bn it has paid in taxes. Page 18

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Airline fined after plane ran out of oil

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

British Midland were ordered to pay £175,000 in fines and costs for putting at risk the lives of 183 passengers and crew in a case which raises questions about the maintenance procedures in British aviation.

Luton Crown Court heard that both engines of a Boeing 737 on a flight from East Midlands to Lanzarote on 23 February 1995 almost ran out of oil because the gearbox covers had been left off during maintenance the previous night.

The engines had less than 10

per cent of the required amount of oil left, which meant the plane was within minutes of losing all power when it made an emergency landing at Luton airport after a 17-minute flight.

It was only thanks to the skill of the captain, Barney Reichman, that a disaster was averted. Judge Daniel Rodwell said: "It is only through the vigilance of the pilot and his crew that the dramatic sudden loss of oil pressure was noticed and the aircraft was able to land safely."

"Had they not noticed, the engine very shortly after would have, if not seized, suffered such a dramatic loss of power that the

aircraft would have crashed with a very high probability of killing all 189 on board."

It was the first prosecution brought against a scheduled airline under legislation introduced in 1989 and is a severe embarrassment for Britain's second largest airline.

As a result of errors by a senior engineer and a fitter, the gearbox covers were left off, allowing the oil to leak out. Both men were sacked.

In passing sentence of fines of £75,000 on each of two counts and costs of £25,000, Judge Rodwell said he had to treat British Midland's lapse "as

a serious one". He said the public must have confidence that airlines do not "cut corners" in safety matters.

Yesterday's verdict coincided with the publication of the report by the Air Accident Investigations Branch into the incident. This linked the airline with two other potential catastrophes caused by faulty maintenance by night staff.

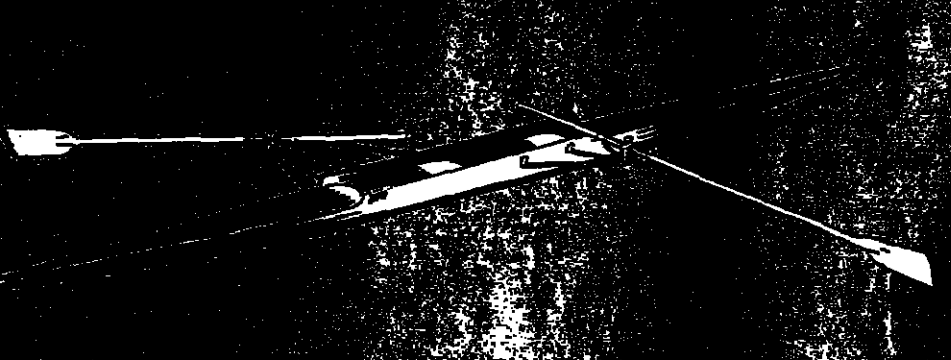
In June 1990, the cockpit window of a BAC1-11 fell out and the pilot was almost sucked out. He was only saved by a steward holding onto his legs. The wrong bolts had been installed, according to the inquiry. And in

1993 flaps on a Virgin A320 were left in the maintenance mode, which meant the aircraft could only turn right.

John Woolf, British Midland's deputy chairman, said: "This has been a difficult day for us, but we have learnt from the experience. We have completely changed our procedures."



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news

Home loans cheapest since 1965

CLIFFORD GERMAN

Nationwide Building Society yesterday cut its standard mortgage rate by 0.25 per cent to 6.49 per cent, the lowest level since 1965, and challenged its rivals to follow suit.

Last night none had done so, but Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, was quick to claim that the move reflected the Government's success in creating a

low-inflation, low-interest-rate economy.

From 1 September new and existing customers of Nationwide will pay 6.49 per cent a year, reducing the cost of a typical £50,000 repayment mortgage from £326.03 to £319.06 a month. It undercuts the Halifax, the Woolwich and the main clearing banks by 0.5 per cent and Abbey National by 0.55 per cent.

Until yesterday Yorkshire Building Society had the cheapest standard variable rate, at 6.59 per cent, although Northern Rock plans a cut to 6.49 per cent next month, and some direct lenders are cheaper still, with mortgage rates as low as 5.99 per cent.

Discount and cash-back mortgage rates linked to Nationwide's standard variable rate will also come down. The

unexpected move revives the mortgage war and renews the rivalry between the banks and those building societies such as Halifax and Woolwich which are converting into banks and giving away cash and shares to members who vote for conversion, and those societies led by Nationwide which are determined to remain mutual societies and pass on benefits to customers in the shape of low-

er mortgage rates and higher returns on savings.

Nationwide has already made selective cuts in mortgage rates and maintained or increased savings rates at a combined cost of £200 million a year, nearly half its pre-tax profits of £459 million in the year to the end of March 1996.

Nationwide will also cut rates paid to savers, although the details had not been decided, the

chief executive, Brian Davis, said. Rivals have been edging rates on selected savings accounts lower in recent weeks and most of them have cut rates three times this year compared to two at Nationwide.

Nationwide currently pays 4.2 per cent on a typical £1,000 deposit in a 90-day notice account, compared to 3.15 per cent at Abbey National and 3.05 per cent at Halifax.

Postal dispute heads towards deal

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

The long-running and damaging dispute at the Royal Mail is heading towards a settlement through the conflict at London Underground remains in deadlock and brought chaos to the capital yesterday.

Leaders of the Communication Workers' Union called off today's planned strike by 130,000 postal workers after "considerable progress" was made at a 25-hour session of negotiations at the conciliation service Acas which ended at noon yesterday.

With no sign of progress in the Tube dispute, however, there seemed little chance that another day-long walk-out on Monday would be avoided.

At the Royal Mail it was thought that some disruption might take place today because the walk-out was cancelled at such a late stage, but both sides were confident of a peace deal. The decision by the CWU prompted Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, to "defer" his plan to suspend the Royal Mail's monopoly. He warned however that he would not hesitate to allow private operators to deliver letters for less than £1 - the cut-off rate for the monopoly - if disruption continued. Further talks are to



Slow going: Bus passengers caught up in traffic congestion during yesterday's London Underground strike

Photograph: Andrew Burran

take place over the weekend ahead of a 48-hour stoppage scheduled to begin next Wednesday, following three previous day-long strikes. Members of the postal executive of the CWU have been told that union negotiators are near agreement on the key issues and that they will be asked to deliver the final verdict on Monday.

Alan Johnson, general secretary, told his executive yesterday that assurances had been received on the issue of "team-

working" which employees' representatives had suspected was a device for getting more work for minimal reward.

Mr Johnson also declared his confidence that a new form of words from management would afford more protection for full-time jobs. The CWU has asked the Royal Mail to ensure that 30 per cent of mail is set aside for a second delivery in order to guard against part-time working.

A joint statement said:

"Following four days of intensive discussions at Acas, both the Royal Mail and the Communication Workers' Union are confident they can reach agreement which resolves all the outstanding items in the dispute."

It added that a settlement was expected over the weekend. The dispute over working hours on London Underground however seemed nowhere near resolution as commuters and tourists were stranded and roads seized up. Instead of the

usual 440 Tube services, the combined action by the RMT and Aslef unions meant that there were only 10.

Jimmy Knapp, RMT leader, accused management of a "go slow" over talks. He said that unless the Government intervened to insist on negotiations, Monday's strike was inevitable.

Ann Burfitt, director of human resources at London Transport, repeated her insistence that the argument should go to arbitration and that the

unions should suspend Monday's action.

If the unions were serious about a reduction in the working week rather than a substantial pay rise they would accept an offer which cut working time to 37.5 hours, but offered a 2.4 per cent rise rather than 3.2 per cent.

Lew Adams, Aslef general secretary, said that she was being "mischievous" because that offer had already been rejected.

Crime victims' cash goes to upgrade prisons

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

A looming crisis in the prison service has forced the Home Office to take £90m from funds intended for victims of crime and spend it on extra cells and improved security in jails, it emerged yesterday. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme was budgeted to pay

out £262m in the year up to April 1997, but the Home Office now believes it will need less than two-thirds of that amount.

The move was immediately attacked by groups representing victims, and by Labour MPs who argued that the fund had already been cut after changes introduced in April. But Home Office sources stressed yesterday that victims would not suf-

fer and that everyone awarded compensation, would be paid. The emergency measure comes because of the rapidly rising prison population and the Treasury's refusal to provide extra funds. The additional £90m this year is to pay towards an extra 4,500 places in prison, and help upgrade security at five "core" local prisons used to house some high-risk Catego-

ry inmates. The decision follows months of lobbying by the Prison Service amid dire warnings of overflowing jails and likely disorder. Estimates predict a population of 60,000 by autumn next year, compared with the 55,000 now behind bars.

Penal reformers and Labour MPs believe the decision of Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, to divert money from

the CICS reveals the desperation of ever-spilling prison costs. Jack Straw, shadow home secretary, said: "Nothing better illustrates the Tories' failure on law and order than the spectacle of the victims of serious violent crime having to foot the bill for the crisis in our prisons."

In April Mr Howard was criticised for his decision to change the CICS from one where victims were paid according to their circumstances, to a cheaper tariff-based system.

Helen Peggs, spokeswoman of Victim Support, said: "If the Home Office thinks there is spare money available it should go to victims of crime. Richard Tilt, Prison Service director general, welcomed the cash since the system faced a budget cut of 13.5 per cent over three years.

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

A Cornish town united in grief yesterday at the funeral of a schoolgirl Caroline Dickson, 13, who was raped and murdered on a French holiday. Parents and pupils wept openly as they crowded to overflowing the historic St Mary Magdalen Church in the heart of Launceston, on the edge of Bodmin Moor. Hundreds more stood outside the parish church in brilliant sunshine as the service ended.

Many of the wreaths were shaped like cats, reminders of the schoolgirl's pet, Bimbo. One floral tribute was from Launceston College, where she was a second-year pupil. It said: "A quiet and gentle girl of whom we were so proud." Another tribute card bore poignant pencilled messages from classmates. One said simply: "Why?" and another: "You will be missed, never forgotten." It was a week ago that Caroline's killer crept into the hostel at Plome-Fourgeres, near St Malo, to her ground floor room. A 39-year-old local tramp with a history of sex offences has been charged with her murder.

The tiny Scottish island of Egg, with a population of just 60, is up for sale for the second time in 15 months. The island, in the Inner Hebrides, is on the market for at least £2m, according to estate agents Knight Frank of Edinburgh.

The present owner, a German artist called Maruma, bought the island for £1.5m last year and promised to invest £15m. Instead, he sold off the cattle, a mainstay of the fragile local economy. The previous owner was Keith Schellenberg, a colourful Yorkshire businessman and former Olympic bobsled champion, clashed with his tenants over his plans to maintain Egg's unspoiled nature and reluctance to install basic amenities. In the tense final months of his tenure, his vintage Rolls Royce was destroyed in a mystery fire. When he left, the islanders threw a party to celebrate comparing his departure to the liberation of Haiti from Papa Doc Duvalier.

Anti-nuclear protesters attacked a convoy of nuclear warhead carriers with red paint to highlight the dangers of moving the weapons around Britain. Five vehicles carrying Trident warheads from Berkshire to Scotland were blocked by three CND members as they stopped for lunch at RAF Leeming in Yorkshire.

The protesters, all women, walked into the path of the vehicles on a minor road and sprayed the cab of one of the carriers with red glass paint, delaying the convoy by up to two hours. A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence said: "We take no notice of CND protests."

Private health insurers faced criticism from the Office of Fair Trading yesterday, which called for regulation of sales, warnings about future cost increases, and sales literature changed, so that rival schemes can be compared.

"The combination of medical matters and insurance makes these products doubly difficult to understand and almost impossible to compare," said John Bridgeman, Director General of Fair Trading. "Even the well-educated will at present find it hard to make good judgements. Given that insurance is called on when people are vulnerable, this is not the time to discover that a mistake has been made." Nicholas Timmins

Channel 4's Gulliver's

Travels has picked up an unprecedented 10 Emmy nominations - the most nominations ever received by a British production in the prestigious awards. The two-part mini-series starring Ted Danson was a huge success in the United States, gaining an audience of 53 million.

It was produced by Duncan Kenworthy, who also made *Four Weddings And A Funeral*. With its all-star cast and spectacular special effects, Gulliver's Travels also won Channel 4 its second biggest audience - after *Four Weddings And A Funeral*. The cast included Danson's wife Mary Steenburgen, Edward Fox and his brother, James, Omar Sharif, Nicholas Lyndhurst, Edward Woodward, Sir John Gielgud and Richard Wilson.



The Government is to pay the £2.7m costs incurred by local authorities as a result of the Dunblane massacre, it was announced yesterday. Scottish Secretary Michael Forsyth announced that the three councils affected would be fully reimbursed to meet extra policing, education and social work costs.

The full amount was being given in recognition of the "wholly exceptional" circumstances of the March tragedy when Thomas Hamilton shot dead 16 children and their teacher in the gymnasium of Dunblane Primary School.

Just days after breaking up for the summer holidays, a schoolboy has died of meningitis. Teachers yesterday paid tribute to promising sportsman and musician James McNeill, 15, a pupil at the King Edward VI School in Birmingham. James fell ill last weekend and was taken to Birmingham Children's Hospital, but died on Tuesday.

Dr Stuart Grainger, a representative of the school's foundation, said James's parents, who live in the Handsworth area of the city, were too distressed to speak about his death. "All our thoughts today are with his family," he added.

A woman was jailed for life for the murder of a young Shepherd, 25, disappeared a year ago after going to meet a man in Sheffield. She has never been heard of since. During a three-week trial, Sheffield Crown Court was told that her ex-boyfriend, Peter Turner, was charged with her murder after spots of her blood were found in his car.

Turner, 23, of Doncaster Road, Workson, Notts, denied he had seen her on the night she went missing, but he had a motive for killing the student because he had been charged with assault and she was due to give evidence against him.

Doctors can safely return to giving newborn babies dangerous bleeding disease early in life, according to research published in the *British Medical Journal* yesterday. Routine use of injected vitamin K has been cut back in favour of less effective capsules after fears raised in 1990 that the injections produced higher rates of leukaemia and cancer in children.

Two new studies, however, show there is no such link. It appears that the disease can be completely eradicated "without the threat of leukaemia and childhood cancer as a side effect," the journal reports. Nicholas Timmins

Wife jailed for contract killing of private eye

JASON BENNETTO

When Barry "the bastard" Trigwell was found bludgeoned to death in a half-filled bath at his home in the West Midlands, a colleague of the private investigator suggested that the killer could be any one of about 50 people.

Mr Trigwell, 44, appeared to have excelled at making enemies around the world during his career as a private eye. One of his specialties was snatching "tug of love" children for money, as well as developing unhealthy connections with underworld figures. At first the police had almost too many prime suspects to the murder. One person few suspected of being responsible was his wife of less than a year, Anne, who was 6,000 miles away in South Africa when the murder took place.

But yesterday, Ethel Anne Trigwell, 43, was jailed for life for hiring two South African hitmen to assassinate her husband. The reasons were the



Anne Trigwell: Recruited two South African hitmen

oldest ones in the book - sex and money.

Passing sentence at Birmingham Crown Court, Mr Justice Nelson said: "The jury have convicted you of murder. This was cold, calculated offence. A chilling murder."

The fantastical tale of murder and deceit began shortly af-

ter the couple married. Anne Trigwell began making frequent visits to South Africa, apparently to visit her daughter. In fact, she was seeing her former lover, Jan Burger.

She soon became interested in the £400,000 should would inherit on the death of her husband. To that end, she paid a Johannesburg nightclub owner £15,000 for a contract killing, the court heard. Two men were hired and dispatched to Britain.

In February last year, Mr Trigwell was found at the couple's home in Sutton Coldfield. However, Anne Trigwell was overheard planning the hit by the wife of the nightclub owner - a brothel-keeper - planning the hit and told the court of a meeting between Trigwell and the two hitmen, Loren Sundkvist and Paul Ras.

Det Supt Ken Evans, who led the murder inquiry, said he hoped to bring back the two alleged hitmen before a British court. He described Trigwell as "a hard, cold and callous woman".

Boys' march could be blocked

MICHAEL STREETER

Organisers of the Apprentice Boys parade through London-derry, the next flashpoint in Northern Ireland, yesterday voiced fears at reports the RUC will try to block their route.

A police spokesman said that officers were "considering all options" in the build-up to the parade on 10th August.

Mr. William Moore general secretary of the Apprentice Boys Association said they would be bitterly opposed to any

attempt to close access to the route around the old city walls, part of which overlooks the Nationalist Bogside area.

Such a move could potentially lead to another Drumcree, where Orangemen were involved in a four-day stand off with security forces before they were allowed to march past a Nationalist area of Portadown. The Apprentice Boys have refused to meet with the Bogside residents' group who last night organised a civil rights march through the city includ-

ing a Protestant area, bringing back memories of similar marches in 1969.

Talks between the SDLP and both sides of the community are continuing and Northern Ireland Security Minister Sir John Wheeler is due in the city in the next few days to help broker an agreement.

Unionist and Nationalist politicians are trying to agree on an agenda for talks. A full plenary session seems certain to start on Monday and is expected to agree to rules for talks.

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Jp 11/20/96

Scares empty John Bull's cupboard

Pickings are slim as lamb joins the danger list

GLENDIA COOPER

Lamb chops and mint sauce have joined roast beef and Yorkshire pudding as a culinary catastrophe for any aspiring hostess to serve up for dinner these days following evidence that BSE can spread to sheep, goats and deer.

Seven to watch

- Eggs: Salmonella scare 1988. Pregnant women, the old and young children advised against soft-boiled eggs.
- Ready cooked poultry/soft cheeses: Listeria outbreak 1989 - pregnant women, old and young told to avoid eating them.
- Hazelnut yoghurt: Botulism found in one batch 1989. Now safe.
- Beef: Fears of link between BSE in cattle and CJD in humans. Now extended to lamb, goats and deer.
- Apple juice: February 1993 high levels of patulin, a naturally occurring toxin found in juice. Now monitored by manufacturers.
- Carrots: May 1995. High levels of organophosphates on carrots led the government to advise peeling carrots before eating.
- Baby Milk: May 1996. 9 leading brands of baby milk said to contain levels of "gender bender" chemicals called phthalates. The European Commission concluded that there was no danger to babies.

It seems a little of what you fancy proves confusing, with every foodstuff a potential minefield of gender-bending chemicals, carcinogens, or vomit-inducing bacteria.

So with the latest dishes to be rejected at your favourite restaurant being the Barnsley chop, curried goat or venison

casserole, the obvious answer seems to be to turn to poultry.

Call back the waiter, though. Chicken is a no-no - if the salmonella doesn't get you (remember Edwina Currie?), the listeria in ready-cooked poultry will.

There is always fish, food for the brain and good for the heart, as long as they have not been swimming in polluted waters and really are fresh when you buy them - oily fish spoil more rapidly than white fish and can cause a stomach-upset and skin-rash reaction known as scombotoxigenicity. And people who eat raw fish run the risk of getting worms (one of the hazards of Japanese food).

Forget the fish and two veg then and just go for the greens. But before the vegetarians get too smug, you are not out of the woods yet. In May 1995 the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food advised people to peel, top and tail their carrots before eating them after it was discovered that some had more than 25 times the expected content of organophosphates, pesticides sprayed on crops to protect them against the destructive carrot fly.

Just a baked potato for Sir, then? Solanine and chaconine are alkaloids found in potatoes, occurring in the highest quantities in the above-ground parts and in the sprouts. Acute illness and even death have resulted following the consumption of sprouted (or green or blighted) potatoes. These alkaloids cause drowsiness, difficulty in breathing and paralysis. They also inflame the gut, leading to stomach-ache and diarrhoea.

An outbreak of potato poisoning occurred in Lewisham in 1978, when 78 schoolboys were taken ill after a meal containing potatoes later found to contain high levels of alkaloids.

Leave the main course and move on to dessert. No cheese - Brie and Camembert are prime candidates for listeria. The obvious healthy option is fruit, low in calories, high in vitamins and high in sugar. But continuous munching of fruit can lead to tooth decay.



Mars-mad Scots told they must eat to live

GLENDIA COOPER

Scots were told to stop "eating themselves to death" yesterday as the Government launched a drive to encourage those north of the border to eat more healthily.

In Scotland, home of the deep-fried Mars bar, where the traditional diet is too heavy in fat, sugar and salt, people are 34 per cent more likely to die before the age of 65 than those south of the border. A menu of 71 recommendations has been drawn up which will urge supermarkets, schools, the NHS and farmers to promote a healthier diet.

More than 2,600 people under 65 die each year from heart disease in Scotland and more than 4,000 from cancer and 700 from strokes.

"An unhealthy diet is a significant factor in many of these cases," said Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, the Scottish Health Minister. "We owe it to ourselves and our children to do what we can to reduce these dismal statistics and change the eating habits which have helped push us to the bottom rungs of the European health ladder."

The Scottish Diet Action Group, which includes nutritionists, doctors, local authorities, farmers and food retailers, has drawn up a blueprint which will target pregnant women, babies, young children and those on low incomes. The initiative will be funded by £1m of new government money over the next three years.

Lord James said it was the most comprehensive action plan that had been drawn up to tackle Scotland's long-standing unhealthy-eating problems

and he urged consumers to "jump out of the frying pan into the fire bowl".

He said the plan recognised that people could not be forced to eat what they did not want to. Instead, the group hoped to encourage supermarkets and food producers and suppliers, councils, caterers and retailers to promote healthy eating.

In autumn all households will be sent a mailshot which will give hints on healthy eating. Some of the money will pay for a national project officer to promote a healthy-diet initiative in poor communities.

Advertisements will promote fruit, vegetables, leaner meat, cereal and fish and caterers will be trained to provide healthy options. And supermarkets will be urged to develop healthier products and put more informative labelling on foods.

Robert Kendall, Scotland's Chief Medical Officer, said eating habits there had improved over the past 20 years. "There are fewer people living on Scotch [meat] pie and chips but we are still lagging behind the rest of Europe and we do not need to."

He said one of the easiest ways of improving diet was for producers of canned and other processed food slowly to reduce the sugar and salt in their products, so that the public would not notice any difference.

Lord James said that progress would be monitored closely with the new Scottish health survey, which will track changes in eating habits over a 10-year period.

"The first survey is under way and will be published next spring," he said. "Further surveys will then follow at three-yearly intervals."

Khan offers public apology to Botham

CLARE GARNER

Imran Khan changed his tune again yesterday and admitted that his defence - a plea of justification - had failed. The dramatic climbdown came on the ninth day of the High Court cricket libel trial, as the real battle between England and Pakistan got underway at Lord's.

The former Pakistani captain withdrew his defence that his allegations of ball-tampering against Ian Botham were justified and offered the former England all-rounder a public apology. The withdrawal was as much of a surprise as the claim itself, which had been sprung on the plaintiff just days before the case opened.

The plea of justification had relied on two clips of video footage of Mr Botham during test matches against India and Pakistan in 1982, which Mr Khan claimed showed Mr Botham tampering with a ball. Mr Botham is suing Mr Khan for an article published in the Sun newspaper in May 1994, in which he claims to have been ac-

cused of ball-tampering, which he says he has never done.

Mr Khan told Mr Justice French and the jury that he accepted Mr Botham's evidence that in the India match he was pushing the ball back into shape. His counsel, George Carman QC, had argued that Botham had been using his fingernails to lift or scratch the seam. "I have no reason to doubt Ian when he says he was repairing the ball," said Mr Khan. "I am prepared to go along with that. If he says he was squeezing the ball, then fine, he was squeezing the ball."

Asked by Mr Carman about incidents during the Pakistan Test when, according to Mr Botham, his reason for throwing the ball back to wicket-keeper Bob Taylor was so he could dry it with his gloves, Mr Khan said he had never heard of this practice before. Mr Carman had suggested that Mr Botham's intention had been for Mr Taylor to remove lacquer from the ball.

"Everyone immediately uses the trousers, which is a much

more simple thing than throwing it to the keeper who has rubber in his gloves," said Mr Khan. "But having heard Ian Botham and Bob Taylor, if they say that is what happened, I will accept that they were drying the ball," he said.

In his opening speech, Charles Gray QC, counsel for Botham and Lamb, had described the justification plea as a "last-ditch attempt" by Mr Khan. Yesterday, he said he was angry that allegations that had received the widest publicity were only now being withdrawn. Mr Khan replied: "At no stage have I ever called Mr Botham a cheat. It is technical ball-tampering. I have never regarded it as cheating."

Mr Gray said that as a result of the plea of justification being put on record, a "stream of witnesses" had to be called. Mr Khan said: "Yes, it is because of their evidence that I dropped it. I have no reason to call them liars."

In addition to Mr Botham's action against the Sun article, he has joined Allan Lamb in suing Mr Khan over an "offensive personal attack" on them in India Today magazine, which they say called them racist, uneducated and lacking class and upbringing. Mr Khan, who denies libel, says his words were taken out of context.

During his cross-examination by Mr Gray, Mr Khan said he was aware of increased racism in England. "Had I, of course, not married Jenima, and I didn't know her when I held those views. I would always have wanted my children to grow up in Pakistan because children are very sensitive," he said. "But now I'm married to an English girl, of course things are different. I would like my child to know both cultures."

Bardot backs the big bad wolf

MARY DEJEVSKY

An unlikely coterie of crack French troops, huntsmen, shepherds and Brigitte Bardot have come together in pursuit of the "wolf of Larzac", a beast said to have cost farmers 50 lambs since May. No one has actually seen the wolf, but apocrypha in the villages insist that a policeman fired at it from 20 yards and missed.

Last weekend, the beast struck again, and an expeditionary force was mustered, including troops from the nearby base. The arrival of the soldiers had almost as much symbolic as practical value.

Twenty years ago, conservationists stopped the expansion of the base in Larzac, a wild highland in the centre of southern France, and it is still a byword for "alternative" lifestyles.

On Wednesday, though, a 200-strong posse set out to hunt the wolf. Wolves being protected animals in France, the expedition needed a special licence - which is where Brigitte Bardot came in.

Her foundation for the protection of animals offered a reward of 10,000 francs (£1,282) for the capture of the animal alive. As a result, the hunt was not quite united. The shepherds, it is reported, wanted the wolf dead, while some troops dreamt of man-to-wolf combat and seizing the beast alive.

All, alas, were to be disappointed as the wolf stubbornly stayed away. Le Monde had a simple explanation: "There's always a wolf, a good old family wolf... to save the silly season". If there's nothing to say, no news - we say, let's go on a wolf-hunt.

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Cross culture: Imran Khan and his wife Jenima want their child to understand both England and Pakistan

£4bn RAF order as Clarke backs off

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY and COLIN BROWN

Three orders for the RAF worth nearly £4bn were announced yesterday by Michael Portillo, Secretary of State for Defence, after a close-fought battle with the Treasury. The orders, for a new air-launched cruise missile, an air-launched anti-tank missile and new maritime patrol aircraft will safeguard 5,000 jobs, he said.

The announcement had been expected before the parliamentary recess began on Wednesday but was delayed at the last minute because of Treasury doubts.

It marked a victory for Mr Portillo over Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, after the intervention of Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, to end the squabble over spending between the Treasury and the Ministry of Defence.

Mr Heseltine, a former Secretary of State for Defence who resigned from the Thatcher Cabinet over defence orders for helicopters, insisted on boosting British industry and forced the Treasury to back off.

His intervention came after Tory MPs tabled a Commons motion protesting at the delay and at a threat by the Chancellor to cancel at least one of the orders. The MPs, led by Keith Mans, chairman of the Tory backbench defence committee, were furious with the refusal of the Treasury to allow the orders to go through.

Mr Clarke, having been heavily criticised by Thatcherites

who want him to cut spending to provide tax cuts, had been determined to put the Thatcherite Mr Portillo on the spot by putting pressure on him to find savings in his budget.

Both the new missiles, due to enter service in 2001, will be carried by the RAF's new Eurofighter, which will enter service at the same time, as well as by existing aircraft.

The Conventionally Armed Stand-Off Missile - Casom - is designed to hit targets with great accuracy without the launching aircraft having to fly close to them. As expected the MoD chose the Storm Shadow, to be made by British Aerospace and Matra of France.

For the tank-destroying air-launched anti-armour weapon, the MoD chose Brimstone, based on the American Hellfire missile but built by GEC-Marconi.

As expected, the biggest order, for 21 new maritime patrol aircraft at a cost of £2bn, went to British Aerospace for the Nimrod 2000, a new version of the existing Nimrod which is based on the Comet and is 25 years old. Mr Portillo said that such aircraft were particularly important for protecting Britain's Trident missile-carrying submarines but had also played important roles in the Gulf War and in enforcing the arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia.

The Nimrod 2000 retains the 1950s design but has many new components including new wings and new Rolls-Royce engines. The anti-submarine systems will be provided by GEC and Boeing.

Dublin crackdown on organised crime

ALAN MURDOCH

Dublin

The Irish government yesterday pushed five emergency Bills through the Dail to tackle organised crime and drugs trafficking, promised in the wake of last month's murder of crime reporter Veronica Guerin.

After Ms Guerin's killing it was agreed the Dail would return from its summer break for the 10-hour special session to plug major loopholes in Irish law which it was felt were hampering Garda investigations.

No one has yet been charged with the murder of the 36-year-old journalist, one of 12 unsolved contract-type shootings in Dublin in the last two years.

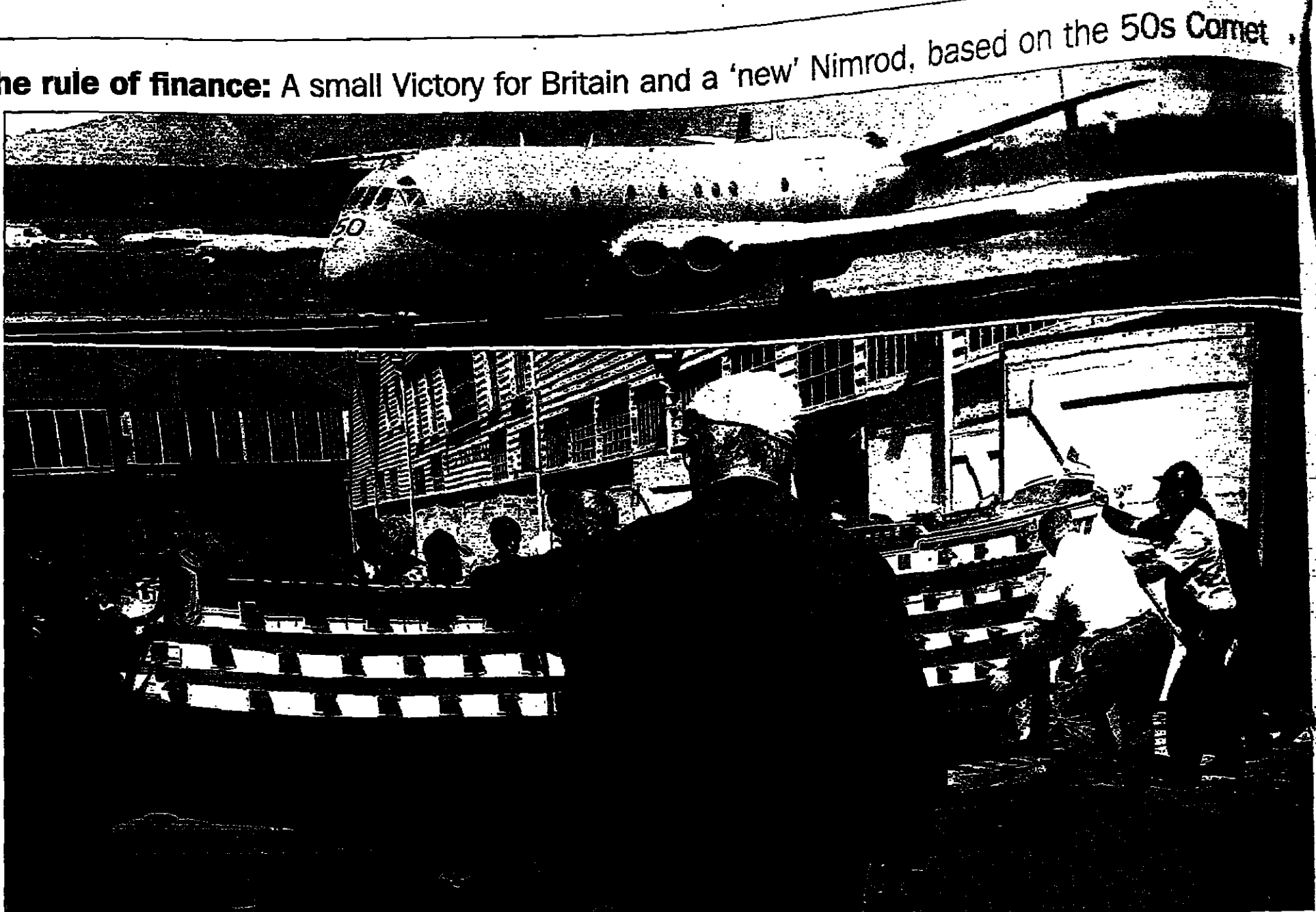
The new powers will allow the assets of criminals to be targeted, and are aimed at providing wider grounds for prosecuting those who orchestrate drugs trafficking but remain remote from their actual distribution.

Courts will be able to freeze assets for up to seven years, with further orders thereafter.

Other changes will see more judges appointed to bring prosecutions to trial faster. The right to silence will be qualified in serious drugs cases with courts allowed to draw conclusions from a suspect's refusal to answer questions; and Garda liaison officers will be posted in The Hague and Madrid to help co-ordinate international action against drug traffickers.

Court remand hearings will be streamlined, and a November constitutional referendum will propose tightening the country's currently liberal bail laws. A further Bill was introduced to establish a Criminal Assets Bureau to trace criminal wealth.

The Taoiseach, John Bruton, said the measures were "balanced and urgent", and would result in more Garda on the streets and urgently-needed extra prison accommodation.



The ever-present past: A replica of HMS Victory built for the 1941 film 'Lady Hamilton' arrives from San Diego at Chatham, Kent, yesterday, on the day an order was announced for a new version of the existing Nimrod, top. The re-styled aircraft could still be in service in 2020, when the design would be 70 years old. Main photograph: Jane Baker

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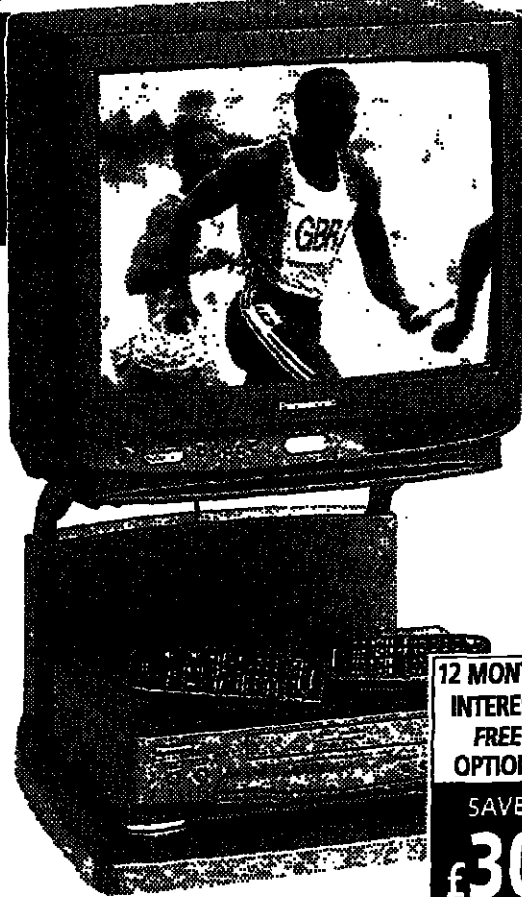
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'Plight of dedicated but depressed lone mother who went unheeded until she abandoned her four-year-old'

REBECCA FOWLER

A portrait of a lonely, desperate mother who could no longer cope emerged yesterday as police continued their search for Julie Lane, who left her four-year-old child beneath a bush in a park in Bournemouth, Dorset, earlier this week.

Miss Lane, 33, was devoted to her son Steven, according to her family who said mother and son were "inseparable". But as she battled with psychological problems, and the strain of losing custody of her older son, Miss Lane apparently broke under the stress.

Steven was found under bushes in his blue track suit on Monday, by a passer-by. He was asleep and shaded from the bright sunshine at the spot where his mother left him three hours earlier, clutching a hold-all. She has not been seen since despite a nationwide appeal.

The only contact Dorset police have had with Miss Lane was a distressed call on Wednesday from a phone box. She wanted to know how Steven was, but when they told her he was with foster parents in Dorset, missing his mother, and pleaded with her to come forward, she hung up.

Despite her dedication to her son, Miss Lane's plight was apparently that of a depressive whose desperation was not heeded. She had shown signs of



Missing: Julie Lane, the devoted mother who is thought to have snapped under stress, above, and her home in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire

growing strain over the last 18 months, after she moved to Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire from Milton Keynes, when she split up with her boyfriend, the father of her older son.

The police repeated their appeal for Miss Lane to come forward last night. Inspector Glen Chalk, leading the investigation, said: "We ask Julie to come forward so she can be reunited with her son. She can be

assured she will be treated with the upmost sympathy."

When her father, George Lane, 62, who lives in Northamptonshire, saw the pictures of Steven on the television news he was shocked to recognise his own grandson. He received a call from his daughter at 4am on Monday, who told him she had spent a lovely weekend at the coast. He speculated she had "taken a bad turn", and the depression had returned.

Neighbours at Plantation Way in Hemel Hempstead say Miss Lane's odd behaviour had intensified since she moved there. She dyed her hair orange, was allegedly aggressive on one occasion, and they would hear Steven screaming for hours on end without being tended to, prompting neighbours to call social services and the police.

Leslie Clark, 40, contacted social services when she heard

him crying for five hours at Easter, from within the terraced council house. She was convinced on one occasion that Miss Lane had barricaded herself into the bedroom when she heard furniture being moved around, and she would worry when she did not Steven for days at a time.

Miss Lane also allegedly told neighbours her older son, Tony, eight, had died. He had been very ill four years ago, and needed open heart surgery, which prompted her to have a nervous breakdown. But Tony is alive and well in Portsmouth where he moved with his father where he lost the custody battle for him 18 months ago.

An inquiry will be held by Hertfordshire social services into Miss Lane's case, but officials denied they had failed to see the danger signs. They also insist she was offered support including help to find Steven a nursery school, which he last attended on Friday, where his progress was carefully monitored.

Liz Raiton, Hertfordshire's assistant director of social services, said: "We did take action. We visited on every occasion when neighbours reported their concern. While we would routinely look at any case like this to make sure we did respond, support was clearly given. From our perception it happened out of the blue."



Abandoned: Steven, four, found in a Bournemouth park Photograph Simon Brooke-Webb

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Magnetic course for happier days

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

A magnet on the brain may make you happy - but only if you are deeply depressed, a study by Spanish doctors says.

Their findings suggest pulses from a four-inch, figure-of-eight shaped magnet placed over the brain may one day replace electro-convulsive therapy [ECT] and drugs which have unpleasant side-effects as the treatment of choice for profound depression.

The finding, published in *The Lancet* today, follows development in the 1980s at the University of Sheffield of single-pulsed magnets, which are increasingly used in brain research to stimulate or block parts of its activity. Present options for chronically depressed patients are "dismal", *The Lancet* said but five 25-minute sessions of treatment over five days with magnet therapy produced pronounced improvement for a fortnight in 17 patients treated in a trial at the University of Valencia.

Although the effect of the treatment lasts a much shorter time than the three to four months of benefit from ECT (when it works), the results are promising. And, unlike ECT, no anaesthesia is required and side-effects are minimal: seven patients reported a minor headache.

Alvaro Pascual-Leone, the neurobiologist who led the study, said they "don't really know" how magnetism treatment works - which applies equally to ECT - "but we think it works differently".

Profound depression, he said, appears to result from a mismatch in activity between the two halves of the brain. ECT shuts down the brain with convulsion-producing current, the theory being that the two halves bounce back in better balance. Magnetic treatment targets only the tiny area of the left prefrontal lobe, the pulses being used to stimulate activity in an area known to have abnormally low activity in depression.

Professor Alvaro Pascual-Leone said studies were being done on possible applications in a range of neurological conditions, from Parkinson's to epilepsy.

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Blair's first government comes into focus



The face of things to come: An imaginary montage of Tony Blair's Cabinet. Standing from left to right: David Blunkett, George Robertson, Tom Clarke, Donald Dewar, Frank Dobson, David Clark, Chris Smith, Michael Meacher, Margaret Beckett, Harriet Harman, Robin Cook, Clare Short, Jack Cunningham, Marjorie Mowlam, Gordon Brown, Jack Straw, Ann Taylor; seated: John Prescott and Tony Blair. Photograph: Johnathan Anstee

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

This would be the look of a future government under Tony Blair after the Labour leader yesterday made the final adjustments to his election team.

The major changes were the punishment of the left-winger Clare Short for a series of minor embarrassments and allowing Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, to tighten his grip on Labour's top team.

Ms Short was moved from transport to overseas development. She refused this at first but then accepted it yesterday afternoon when, as a sop, she was offered a place on a new committee to finalise the party's plans to get people "off welfare and into work".

The transport brief was taken by Andrew Smith, previously Mr Brown's Treasury deputy, and not even a member of the elected shadow Cabinet.

Mr Brown also secured the removal of Chris Smith from

Power dreams: The Labour Party team which is looking for glory in the corridors of power

social security, where he resisted the shadow Chancellor's plans to revamp child benefit for 16-18-year-olds. Mr Smith took the health portfolio, while Harriet Harman, who secured re-election to the shadow Cabinet on Wednesday, takes social security. She is seen as totally loyal by Mr Blair and Mr Brown.

Mr Brown secured promotion for Alistair Darling, who will shadow the Chief Secretary to the Treasury as his number two, and for Dawn Primarolo. Both Andrew Smith and Mr Darling will attend shadow Cabinet meetings, although neither is an elected member.

Mr Blair boosted David Blunkett, education and employment spokesman, by moving Michael Meacher, another left-winger, to a re-created en-

vironmental protection post. This means demotion for Frank Dobson, a traditional Labourite who polled well in Wednesday's elections. He is left with the local government half of the Environment department brief. Further changes in the middle ranks will be announced today.

Ms Short is believed to have furiously resisted demotion, refusing to accept the overseas development post at a meeting with Mr Blair on Wednesday night, and only agreeing in the second of two phone calls yesterday. The shadow Cabinet changes were intended to be announced early yesterday but were postponed until 4.45pm.

Ms Short accepted a place on a new "welfare to work" committee, chaired by Mr Blunkett and including Mr Brown, Ms

Harman and Frank Field. Mr Blair's spokesman said Ms Harman and Chris Smith would be designated "key campaigners" during the election, which will be denied to Ms Short this time.

Shadow Cabinet - Leader - Tony Blair; Deputy leader - John Prescott; Chief Whip - Donald Dewar; Defence, disarmament and arms control - David Clark; Disabled people's rights - Tom Clarke; UP: Education and employment - David Blunkett; DOWN: Environment and London - Frank Dobson; SIDEWAYS: Environmental protection - Michael Meacher; Food, agriculture and rural affairs - Gavin Strang; Foreign and Commonwealth affairs - Robin Cook; Health - Chris Smith; Home affairs - Jack Straw; Leader of the House - Ann Taylor; National Heritage - Jack Cunningham; Northern Ireland - Marjorie Mowlam; DOWN: Overseas development - Clare Short; Scotland - George Robertson; Social Security - Harriet Harman; Trade and Industry - Margaret Beckett; Treasury and economic affairs - Gordon Brown; Wales - Ron Davies.

Appointments from outside the shadow Cabinet - Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster - Derek Foster; UP: Transport - Andrew Smith; UP: Chief Secretary to the Treasury - Alistair Darling.

MPs are on holiday - but what did they do for us?

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

After the months of fury, intrigues about the leadership, sackings, reshuffles, and clashes across the despatch boxes at the House of Commons, what has Parliament achieved?

Apart from a few key bills, such as those on nursery vouchers or divorce law reform, the answer will be - very little. This was not a vintage year. It was more the last dregs of a dying Parliament. The legislation was so thin, that inquiries around Whitehall yesterday produced nonplussed responses from various departments.

MPs increased their productivity this year by 20 per cent, having passed 34 bills for Royal Assent, compared to 27 bills in the previous session. They rewarded themselves with a 26 per cent pay rise.

So, is Britain any better for all the legislation passed this year? The attached table provides a guide. The Family Law Act to reform the divorce laws put the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay, on trial, as the Act came under all-round Tory attack. It finished its passage in a heavily amended state. Couples whose marriages are irretrievably broken down, may come to curse these politicians.

There was also the last vestige of Thatcherism, with a minor piece of legislation on the right-to-buy for "social housing" tenants, and the Act that gave force to vouchers for nursery education. Little else to suggest much ideological zeal though. In fact, Lady Thatcher complained bitterly about the lack of ideology in this Government when she addressed the 1900 Club, a group of elderly knights of the shires, dedicated to the memory of Tory Party zealots.

There was a strong flavour of Majorism to the legislation. Worthy but boring measures included the bill to preserve railway heritage, and the Rating (Caravans and Boats) Act, introduced by John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment.

The small beer included the London Regional Transport Act which allows LRT to raise private finance, and the Government's Deer (Amendment) (Scotland) Act.

Some of the more interesting legislation came from backbenchers, from Alan Meale's protection of wild animals bill, to the Dogs Fouling of Land Act. Other backbench measures for which 1996 will be noted include the Party Wall etc Act, and the Marriage Ceremony (Prescribed Words) Act, which streamlines that part of the ceremony concerned with lawful impediments.

Much of the legislation left officials in Whitehall understandably lost for words last night when asked to explain some of the bills. The Hong Kong (Overseas Public Servants) Act, which received the Queen's Royal Assent on 29 February, after being taken by both the Commons and the Lords, was described by one Whitehall source as "fairly esoteric". It provides, by the way, pension provision for civil servants after the colony is handed over to the Chinese in 1997.

The list of laws passed in this Parliament

BILLS RECEIVING ROYAL ASSENT	POLITICAL PUNCH	REAL IMPACT
ARBITRATION - streamlines law to encourage firms to go for arbitration rather than litigation.	Nil	Nil
AUDIT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) - empowers Audit Commission to probe local authority social services	Nil	Nil
ARMED FORCES - discipline, renewed every five years	*** (Scares in a sweat over gays in the ranks)	*** (Government refused amendments to allow gays in, but likely to change under Euro courts)
ASYLUM AND IMMIGRATION - cuts benefits for asylum-seekers	**** (upset Lords, church, judges, MPs etc)	*** (savings small, but cause outcry)
BROADCASTING BILL - crosses media ownership for digital TV	*	*** (Murdoch, Daily Mirror lost out)
CONSOLIDATED FUND, CONSOLIDATED FUND NO 2, puts £230m tax receipts into a fund	Nil	*** (Ken Clarke would be broke without it)
CHANNEL TUNNEL RAIL LINK BILL - go ahead for last track	Nil	*** (one day)
CRIMINAL PROCEDURE - prosecution and defence disclosure of evidence	Nil	*** (defence can't ambush prosecution)
CHEMICAL WEAPONS - makes it an offence to make chemical weapons	Nil	Nil
CIVIL AVIATION AMENDMENT - powers to arrest in the air	Nil	Nil
COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION - extended its powers to assist governments with privatisation programmes	Nil	Nil
COMMUNITY CARE - cash payments in lieu of community care	Nil	Nil (Unless you are Botham)
DEFAMATION - allows judges to dispose of defamation cases	Nil	Nil
DAMAGES - personal injury claims	****	Nil
EDUCATION SCOTLAND BILL - nursery vouchers etc	**** (Backfired on the Government)	*** (weakened by compromise)
FAMILY LAW - divorce law reform	****	** (green shoots?)
FINANCE BILL - puts last Budget into effect, 1p off tax and 15p on cigarettes	Nil	Nil
HEALTH SERVICE - ombudsman for complaints about GPs	Nil (by the election was in 1970)	Nil
HUMBER BRIDGE DEBTS - wiped out debts for that bridge	*	Nil
HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION - right to buy for tenants of new social housing	Nil	Nil
HONG KONG OVERSEAS PUBLIC SERVANTS - provides pensions after 1997 handover to China	** (put Labour on the spot)	**** (if you are a HK civil servant)
NORTHERN IRELAND EMERGENCY LEGISLATION - renewal of anti-terrorism measures	**** (hustonic)	** (doubt that it works)
NORTHERN IRELAND ENTRY TO NEGOTIATIONS - elections in Ulster	Nil	** (IRA resumed violence, Sinn Féin never got to the table)
NOISE - Harry Greenway (Con), making noise an offence	**** (Harriet Harman in trouble)	*** (if you live in a high rise flat)
NURSERY EDUCATION AND GRANT-MAINTAINED SCHOOLS - vouchers for all four year olds, and lifting bar on borrowing for GMI schools	*** (after killing of teacher)	*** (may not work)
OFFENSIVE WEAPONS - Lady Olga Maitland (Con) tightens law on knives	Nil	Nil
RAILWAY HERITAGE - Mark Robinson (Con) conserving records and artefacts	Nil	Nil
RESERVE FORCES - allows more flexible use of reservists	**	Nil
STUDENT LOANS - allows private loans	Nil	Nil
SEXUAL OFFENCES - John Marshall (Con), outlaw sex-tourism, mainly by paedophiles	* (Apart from civil rights, Labour can't complain)	*** (Godsend for writers of The Bill)
SECURITY SERVICE - lets MI5 fight crime with police	Nil	Nil
TREASURE - Sir Anthony Grant (Con), abolishes treasure trove	Nil	Nil
TRADING SCHEMES - Sir Nicholas Scott (Con), controls chain mail and pyramid-selling	* (shom of ban on looting)	*** (small step for animalkind)
WILD MAMMALS PROTECTION - Alan Meale (Lab), protection from cruelty	**** (huge row)	Nil (it was killed)
And some of those that never made it - DAYLIGHT - John Butterfill (Con), moving Britain to Central European Time	Nil	Nil (killed)
EMPLOYMENT UPPER AGE LIMITS - David Winnick (Lab), banning ageism in ads	Nil	Nil (killed)
PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE - Don Touhy (Lab) protect whistle-blowers	Nil	Nil (killed)
GENDER IDENTITY - Alex Carillo (Lab Dem) allows transsexuals substitute their birth certificates	* (she became first woman whip)	Nil (it was adjourned since die)

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Charity in crisis: Tea rooms may be booming and membership rising, but tax cuts and falling legacies have eroded income



Trust needs £210m to save stately homes

STEPHEN GOODWIN

The National Trust warned yesterday that it faces an uphill struggle in trying to maintain the great houses in its care. More than £210m is needed to halt the natural deterioration of its most fragile properties.

Three major houses alone need £40m of capital work - Knole in Kent, appropriated by Henry VIII; Petworth, West Sussex, painted by Turner; and Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, where 400-year-old tapestries the size of several tennis courts are cracking.

With income from legacies falling, Charles Nunnely, chairman of the Trust, appealed to the Government to allow the distributors of lottery money more flexibility to support restoration projects as well as new acquisitions.

Mr Nunnely was speaking at

the publication of the charity's 1995-96 report and accounts, together with the resolutions to be debated at the annual meeting in November.

Recent AGMs have been dominated by demands for an end to hunting on Trust land. This year, animal welfare campaigners within the Trust switched their attention to cattle markets, with an attempt to bar the charity's hundreds of tenant farmers from sending animals to livestock markets. The Trust owns 141,835 hectares of farmland and lets 685 farm tenancies.

A resolution from members, some of whom also belong to the group, Compassion in World Farming, calls on the Trust's council to ensure that all farm animals under its control are "spared the rigours of livestock markets".

It paints a lurid picture of

baby calves, exhausted breeding ewes and stressed pigs being kicked and beaten by "often poorly-trained drovers". "On stone floors slick with urine and excrement, the animals spend hours awaiting their fate."

The council will oppose the resolution, arguing that there are no satisfactory alternatives to markets. In an accompanying statement, the council points out that since 1995 all new tenancies have included a clause requiring farmers not to treat livestock "in a manner likely to cause unnecessary pain or distress".

But the biggest headache for the Trust is financial. Mr Nunnely said he feared the record results achieved in the Trust's centenary year were "something of a blip". Tea shops were booming and more than 11.6 million people had paid to visit Trust properties, increasing the

revenue surplus from £3.7m to £5.3m, he said. But income from legacies - down from £24.6m in 1994 to £20.4m - and in government support for essential work through English Heritage and the countryside agencies has fallen.

Changes in personal taxation has also hit membership income, the Trust's largest source of revenue. A 1p cut in the standard rate of income tax costs £360,000 in lost income.



State of disrepair: Knole (above) and Petworth (above left, in kitchen) need urgent capital work costing millions

Photograph: Brian Harris

Labour fury as inquiry rejects handgun ban

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

An inquiry by MPs into the issue of firearms, set up after the Dunblane massacre, has refused to recommend the banning of handguns, causing an outcry from Labour members.

The decision by the majority section of Tory MPs on the House of Commons home affairs select committee will be greeted with anger and dismay by relatives of people killed at Dunblane and Hungerford who have been campaigning for handguns to be outlawed.

Labour MPs on the committee attempted to get the final report, which will be published on 12 August, altered on Wednesday but were voted down by Conservative members.

Instead, it is understood that the inquiry will call for tighter licensing laws and closer vetting of gun clubs. Among the recommendations are believed to be calls for new powers to enable police to make more detailed checks on applicants for gun licences. The Conservative members believe an all-out ban is too draconian a measure and is unlikely to prevent another tragedy such as Dunblane.

The MPs' investigation was launched after Thomas Hamilton shot dead 16 children and their teacher at a Scottish primary school in March. Since the tragedy the police, from rank and file members to chief constables, have called for a ban on handguns, which would cover an estimated 250,000 weapons.

Labour MPs, who make up five of the 11 members of the

select committee, also support a ban. They want all handguns to be made illegal except in special cases, which would be decided on merit. This would include sports and gun clubs which could prove they had tight security and that all members were properly scrutinised.

A series of amendments was tabled on Wednesday afternoon, the last day before the Commons finished for the summer, at a meeting of all the committee members. Chris Mullin proposed the tougher recommendations on behalf of the Labour MPs but they were rejected by Tory members led by chairman, Sir Ivan Lawrence.

Neither Mr Mullin nor Sir Ivan were available for comment yesterday, although Labour MPs are expected to speak out publicly against the committee's final recommendations and their rejected amendments will be included in the published report.

The gun lobby is bound to seize upon the committee's findings and use them as ammunition against any recommendation for a ban on handguns by Lord Cullen, whose inquiry into the Dunblane massacre is expected to be published in September.

Gill Marshall-Andrews, co-ordinator of the Gun Control Network, which includes relatives of people murdered in Dunblane and Hungerford, said: "The network will be deeply concerned if the report contains anything less than proposals for radical reform of the gun laws, including the banning of handguns."

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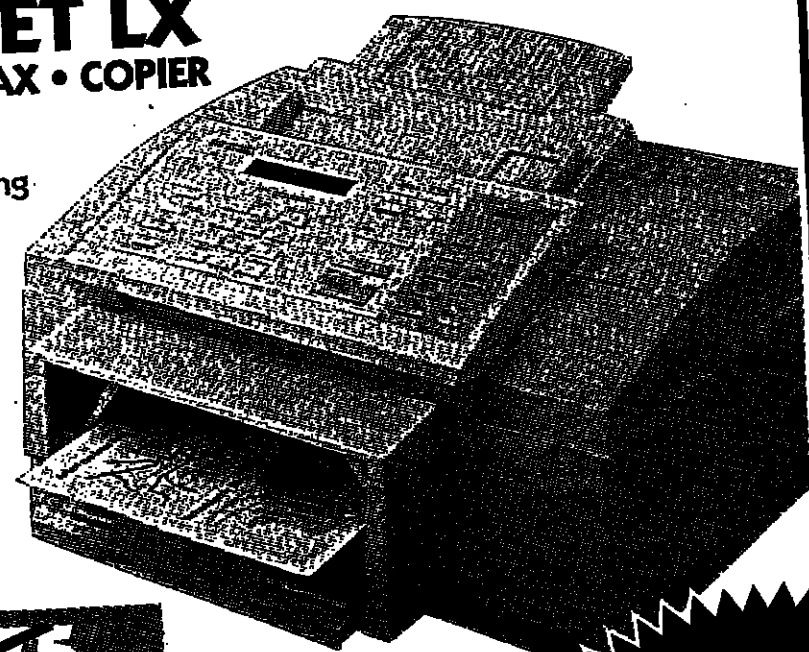
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English schools 'producing under-achievers'

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

English schools have a longer tail of under-achieving pupils than other countries, according to an authoritative study of pupils' performance in science and maths published yesterday.

Even by the age of nine, the gap between the brightest and the dullest is wider than elsewhere. Professor David Reynolds, the author of the study, said:

Prof Reynolds, of Newcastle University, urged schools in England to look at teaching methods in Taiwan and Switzerland in order to reduce the high proportion of pupils who perform badly.

His review of English pupils' performance compared with those in other countries over the last 30 years, which has been widely leaked, shows that in maths, English pupils lag far behind those in the Pacific Rim. They also failed to match pupils in many European countries. Performance in science is slightly better, however.

Prof Reynolds said schools should imitate the motor industry and learn from abroad. "The motor industry saved itself from bankruptcy by creating a British blend of elements from other countries," he said.

The report, commissioned by the Office for Standards in Education, suggests that English teaching methods widened the gap between the brightest and dullest pupils.

They are too complicated, rely too much on work sheets and too little on good, whole-class teaching. In primary schools teachers are too eager to divide children into groups of different ability.

The gap between the worst and best English schools is also wider than in other countries.

Differences between schools account for 12 per cent of pupils' performance in England, compared with only 1 per cent in Taiwan.

The report suggests that children in Pacific Rim countries



Chris Woodhead: Not trying to bash teachers

from that in much of Europe, the report points out. They have mixed-ability primary schools, whereas we tend to group children by ability within primary classes. European schools have selection in later years, though none select as early as 11, whereas we have a comprehensive system.

The report paints a gloomy picture of English pupils' achievements. "Performance in maths is relatively poor overall, but with some strength in data handling and geometry and considerable weakness in arithmetic or number." And it is getting worse. On common questions set in international surveys in the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, English pupils' performance deteriorated.

Only at 17 when the "trailing edge" has dropped out of the system is the performance of English pupils relatively good.

Prof Reynolds said that while cultural differences, such as the higher status of teachers in Taiwan and greater parental commitment to education, could explain some of the variations in pupils' performance, they could not explain them all.

For example, the most recent research showed that English performance in science was improving. "If we are good in one subject area, as we seem to be increasingly good in science, how can that be in the culture?"

The report concludes: "We would argue that the situation in which England finds itself is so worrying that the risk involved in looking outward and trying new practices is worth taking. Indeed, limited experimentation with non-British practice seems positively overdue."

Chris Woodhead, Chief Inspector of Schools, said: "We are not suggesting that methods that work in one culture can be transplanted in a naive, simple way. This is not an exercise in bashing teachers. It is an attempt to contribute to the debate about standards."

How 13-year-olds in Britain rank with rest of the world

Country	Position	%Answers correct
China	1	80
Korea	2	73
Taiwan	3	73
Switzerland	4	71
Finland	5	68
Hungary	6	68
France	7	64
Italy	8	63
Israel	9	63
Canada	10	62
Scotland	11	61
Ireland	12	61
England	14	57
Slovenia	15	55
USA	16	55
Portugal	17	48
Jordan	18	46

Test was devised to be applied to any country



Surfing UK: Competitors waiting their turn at Fistral Beach, Newquay, yesterday on the opening day of the Headwax Cherry Coke Surf Festival. More than 150 surfers from all over the world will be competing for £50,000 prize money over the 12-day event. Photograph: Tony Freeman

Midwife care safest for mothers

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

The Government's policy of encouraging midwife-led management of pregnancy and childbirth is safe and effective, a study has demonstrated.

The findings provide reassurance for a programme launched three years ago with only limited evidence of its effectiveness. But, according to the *Lancet*, which publishes the study today, it also has big implications for many European countries, the United States and Canada, where doctor-dominated deliveries are increasing, with attendant risks for pregnant women.

The study involved almost 1,300 women attending the

Glasgow Royal Maternity Hospital, a big teaching hospital which delivers around 5,000 women a year. Many of the women come from socially disadvantaged areas.

The women had been assessed to see whether they were likely to have any complications which could threaten mother or baby. The majority who did not were then allocated to a random basis to shared care, where midwives, hospital doctors and GPs divided the care between them, or to midwife-managed care, where a named midwife managed care up to and including delivery.

Mothers and babies did just as well in the midwife-led programme, or better. The mothers in the midwife programme

tended to make fewer visits to the doctor and had fewer interventions. They were less likely to be given drugs to start labour, to have an episiotomy – a cut in the perineum – to ease delivery and were no more likely to have a perineal tear.

Complication rates were similar. A fraction fewer than a third were transferred to medically-managed care; 29 per cent for clinical reasons and just under 4 per cent because they chose to make the change.

Both groups of women were satisfied with their care. But those in the midwife-managed group were more so. They were happier with the choices they were offered, with the information that was given, with the decision-making and with the

sense that they were being cared for as individuals.

Intriguingly, fewer had raised blood pressure during pregnancy, a finding which the *Lancet* says "suggests that supportive midwifery care can, perhaps because of its more relaxed atmosphere, have valuable biological effects".

The Glasgow team stressed that the midwife-led service was integrated within a consultant unit, so the results might have differed in another setting.

"There is a need for further studies, to establish whether we would get similar results in a rural unit, or a stand-alone maternity unit," Mary McGinley, head of maternity services at the Glasgow Royal, said.

Dr Marsden Wagner, a

Danish specialist on maternity, says in a leading article that the study has big implications, although relatively high rates of Caesarean section and fetal monitoring suggest that the Glasgow team could still lower its rate of intervention.

But the findings, which will bring comfort to the Government, are of "overriding importance" for North American and EU countries, "where doctors have convinced the public that, although expensive, they are safer than, and to be preferred to, midwives".

The study, Dr Wagner adds, suggests that midwives are "the best lead professional for primary maternity care for the majority of women who have no complications".

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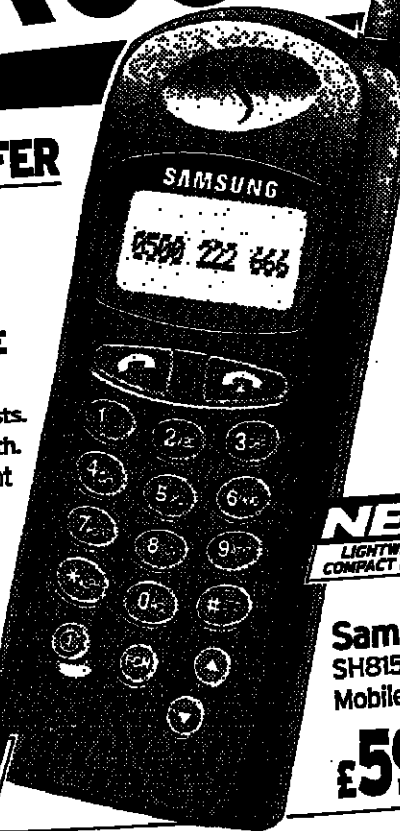
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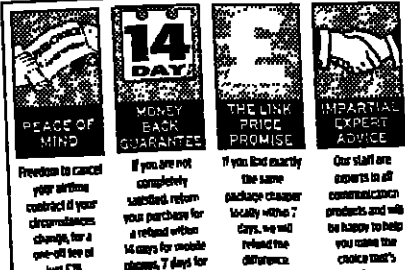
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Zelda Fitzgerald's art makes a novel return

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

Long scattered and almost forgotten, the vivid paintings of the novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald's mentally disturbed wife Zelda are to be belatedly introduced to the world by her granddaughter.

Eleanor Lanahan was inspired to write *Zelda, An Illustrated Life* after being contacted by a student who was writing a dissertation on Zelda Fitzgerald's art.

Her research alerted Ms Lanahan to the whereabouts of many of Zelda's paintings and led her to discover 11 works that her grandmother had painted in therapy exercises in a Baltimore psychiatric clinic.

The book is the first to be devoted to Zelda's art. It is illustrated with dozens of her paintings and gives a frank portrait of the Southern belle who was born in 1900, married Fitzgerald at 20 and was the centre of the Jazz Age until she was diagnosed as a schizophrenic. She was plagued by madness until her death, aged 48, in a fire at an asylum.

In recent years Zelda's fiction, much of it published under the name of her famous husband, has undergone a critical reevaluation. But her art remains unknown. "[It] has been systematically ignored, even rejected, as a serious subject for evaluation and analysis," writes the art historian Jane Livingston in the book.

Zelda turned to painting after a decade of desperate living, immortalised in her husband's *The Great Gatsby*. She and Fitzgerald were seen as a



golden couple. But their dream soured in a morass of drinking.

"Together they caused so many scenes and passed out so often at parties as to become a kind of national attraction. Here come the Fitzgeralds! their friends exclaimed when they entered a room; before the night was over Scott might well have busted up the furniture, tossed figs at his hostess, or chewed and swallowed a wad of \$20 bills before crumpling to the floor," the book says.

An actress, Laurette Taylor, observed after meeting the couple that she had just seen "the doom of youth itself". Zelda was going mad; her doc-

tor described her as "a constitutional, emotionally unbalanced psychopath".

One night on the French Riviera she nearly sped off the Grande Corniche, declaring: "I think I'll turn off here". Another time, she lay down in front of their car and said, "Scott, drive over me".

The Fitzgeralds had a daughter they named Scottie - they had been expecting a boy. For her Zelda did her early paintings of intricate paper dolls.

"Some of them represented the three of us," Scottie wrote. "These dolls had wardrobes of which Rumpelstiltskin could be proud."

Other paintings sprang from Zelda's obsession with dance. Often the ballerinas had enlarged limbs: "That's how a ballet dancer feels after dancing," she explained. She also depicted flowers and cityscapes.

But in her mid-thirties her subject matter changed. She had converted to Christianity and was experiencing religious hallucinations. On one work she daubed in red: "Let Him Who Is Without Sin Cast The First Stone."

The most accessible paintings are the bright, amusing ones Zelda did for Scottie, based on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and fairy tales such as

Goldilocks, Hansel and Gretel, and *The Three Little Pigs*.

Some featured in an exhibition in her lifetime, but it received disappointing reviews. Several friends bought works - but apparently out of pity, for they have all since vanished.

In 1940 Scott died. Their life had proved an ironic comment on Zelda's early observation to her husband: "Both of us are very splashy vivid pictures, those kind with the details left out, but I know our colours will blend, and I think we'll look very well hanging beside each other in the gallery of life."

Zelda, An Illustrated Life, published this month by Abrams.

Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald (above), c.1921, with (far left and above) paper dolls of Zelda and Scott, painted in 1932 for their daughter Scottie. The *Deposition* (right), watercolour and gouache, 1945.



Channel 5 phone poll provokes calls to police

RICHARD HALSTEAD

Channel 5 has received complaints about the conduct of telephone interviews and the questions they asked in the ITV Association's survey - reported in the *Independent* yesterday - which suggested that Channel 5's plans to retune the nation's videorecorders would fall behind schedule.

Some people also complained to the police, though a spokesman would not confirm whether action would be taken.

Recipients of the calls said that the interviewers did not identify themselves clearly, and that they asked questions such as: "Is there a man in the house?" and "What is your annual income?"

When people dialled 1471 afterwards to find out the number of the caller, they found that the function had been disabled.

Industry guidelines state that canvassers must identify which company they are calling from, and give a return telephone number. However, they allow canvassers to conceal the name of the client company, and to ask detailed and sometimes personal questions.

Kurt Thompson, the Taylor Nelson executive overseeing

the ITV survey, confirmed that it had included questions designed to get a balance between men and women and between income groups, but he maintained that his canvassers had conducted the research within the guidelines.

"There was nothing sinister about the questions we asked," he said.

Last night Channel 5 would only say publicly that they remained confident they would be on the air by January. But, privately, executives are understood to be increasingly annoyed at what they see as a concerted campaign to undermine a potential competitor.

Goldman Sachs recently estimated that the ITV companies

would lose £30m in advertising revenues in Channel 5's first year on air.

The chairman of the ITVA, Barry Cox, said the survey "was not part of a dirty tricks campaign" against Channel 5. He added: "We have an entirely legitimate commercial interest in finding out how their retuning efforts are going."

Next Monday Channel 5 is due to outline its plans for retuning videorecorders in 10 million homes across the country, starting in September. Before the channel can start broadcasting, it must satisfy the Independent Television Commission that 90 per cent of viewers within its reception area can tune in.

DAILY POEM

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

By WB Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes
dropping slow;
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket
sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

Yeats's early poems appear in the Phoenix 60p series under the title *Sailing to Byzantium*. His most melodious work is here - "The Wild Swans at Coole", "The Tower" and "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven" - interwoven with passionate verse for the revolutionary Maud Gonne and fired lyricism for Ireland's heroic character in the face of civil war.

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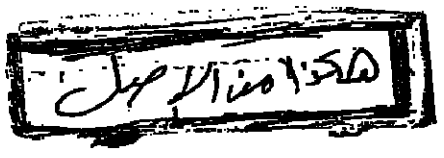
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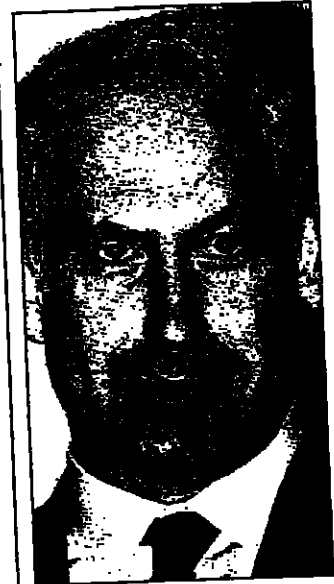


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international Israel boosts West Bank settlers



Netanyahu: 'No surprises'

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

The Israeli government plans to increase the number of settlers on the West Bank by 50,000 by lifting the restrictions on settlement construction imposed by the last government. The move of settlers into areas Palestinians hoped would form part of their autonomous enclave undermines fundamentally the land-for-peace formula which is the basis for the Oslo accords.

The settlements will be built along a system of bypass roads which Israel has constructed throughout the West Bank, which avoid Palestinian towns and villages, according to Israeli press reports. A first step will be to populate 1,500 empty housing as well as continuing

building in existing settlements. The friction between the 1.3 million Palestinians on the West Bank and the 140,000 Israeli settlers is at the heart of the conflict in the Middle East. Benjamin Netanyahu, the newly elected prime minister, and his government see the West Bank as the Land of Israel given by God to the Jews.

"The plan will pivot around the lifting of the freeze and restrictions on settlement construction which were employed by the Labour government," says the daily *Haaretz*. "Government sources estimate that in this way it will be possible to enlarge the number of Israelis in the territories by adding some 50,000 residents." The US will be informed of any new settlement being built. Mr Netanyahu is quoted as telling

President Bill Clinton: "I'll update you in advance. We will not surprise you."

Previous statements by Mr Netanyahu suggest that the new settlement activity will be largely funded privately and not by the government. This shows the Prime Minister's tactical agility since Israelis living in Israel have resented in the past money lavished on settlements by the state which they would prefer to have spent on services for themselves.

The so-called bypass roads are more ambitious than their name suggests since they form a system of highways much superior in quality to the roads used by the Palestinian population. North of the Palestinian enclave of Ramallah yesterday bulldozers and trucks were carving through the soft brown rock

to make way for a new road. Although Mr Netanyahu does foresee some division of authority in the West Bank between Israel and the Palestinian Authority the expansion in the number of the Palestinian enclaves. Mr Netanyahu wants areas of the West Bank retained for security reasons to be used for settlements.

"Netanyahu believes that settlement create facts with respect to the final status agreement [with the Palestinians]," says Nahum Barnea, the Israeli columnist. "The creation of facts on the ground is a tried and true principle which runs through Zionist history, and it now applies to Judea and Samaria [West Bank]."

The same suspicion has presumably occurred to Yasser

Arafat, the Palestinian leader, who is in Syria for his first extensive talks in 13 years. He may try to compensate for deteriorating relations with Tel Aviv by seeking a new understanding with Damascus.

Mr Netanyahu met Dennis Ross, the American peace coordinator yesterday in Jerusalem to discuss Syria, the Palestinians and the "Lebanon First" option whereby Israel would withdraw from a neutralised South Lebanon under the control the Lebanese government. It is unlikely, however, that Syria, as the predominant power in Lebanon, would favour a plan which would free Israel of its costly entanglement there. Israel is making clear that it will respond to attacks by Hizbollah guerrillas by bombing Syrian military positions in Lebanon.

Investigators hope to hear crash voices

New York — Investigators were daring to hope yesterday for their first clues into what befell TWA flight 800 before its fiery crash into the Atlantic more than week ago, after divers at last retrieved the aircraft's "black boxes" from the ocean floor.

The boxes, actually painted orange, were flown to the headquarters of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) in Washington for analysis. One is a voice recorder with tapes of cockpit conversations; the other should carry data on the Boeing 747's mechanical status at the time of the accident off the New York coast.

The discovery of the boxes represented the first major breakthrough in an investigation that has otherwise been agonisingly slow in producing results. The overriding question still remained: was the aircraft brought down by sabotage or by some extraordinary mechanical failure? If sabotage is determined, how was it perpetrated, by a bomb or possibly even by a missile?

There was some optimism that the first results from the analysis of the recorders might become available within hours, even as early as last night. "The tapes were in good condition," said Bernard Loeb, an official at the NTSB in Washington. "We hope to have information off both recorders today."

However, officials cautioned against expecting too much from the tapes. If they were disabled at the same instant that the tragedy occurred, for instance, they may offer little to investigators. "I can't even say if the recorders will yield that information," Mr Loeb added.

The hitherto crawling pace both of the investigation and of the task of recovering bodies from the wreckage has led to outbursts of bitterness from friends and relatives of the victims staying at a hotel close to John F Kennedy airport, New York. Of the 230 who perished in the crash, the bodies of 114 had been recovered by yesterday morning and 95 had been identified.

Agony goes on as TWA team bank on 'black boxes', reports David Usborne

Yesterday, President Bill Clinton and the First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, visited the hotel to offer sympathy to those who had lost family members. Those present at the meeting said the First Lady cried as she talked to those still waiting for news of their lost ones.

Mr Clinton, meanwhile, was set later yesterday to announce a new regime of security measures for all flights within the United States. The US has lagged behind most European countries in introducing strict security checks in its domestic airports. Vice President Al Gore was set to head a new commission to oversee the tightening of security at all US airports.

Among the immediate steps likely to be taken will be a requirement that all baggage travelling within the US is in future matched to passengers boarding aircraft as well as new arrangements to ensure that all bags, both hand luggage and that checked in, are subjected to X-ray inspections.

In a diplomatic move stemming from the downing of Pan-Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, eight years ago, the US, Britain and France meanwhile circulated a letter at the United Nations - yesterday claiming that sanctions subsequently imposed on Libya for its role in the attack are being partially ignored by countries around the world.

It identified China and Lebanon among countries that have allowed Libya's diplomatic presence in their capitals to rise, as well as Jordan and Egypt, among others, for illegally allowing Libya to operate offices in their capitals for the state airline, Libyan Arab Airlines.



Looking for clues: An official checks one of the 'black boxes' retrieved yesterday from the crash scene

Photograph: AP

Castro implicated in massive cocaine smuggling operation

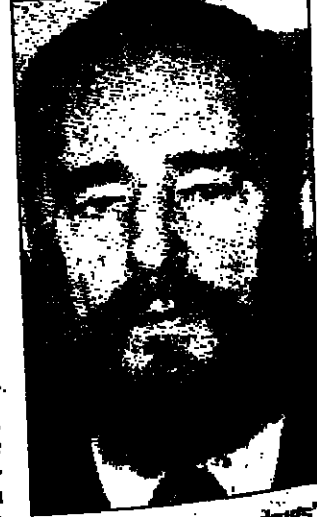
PHIL DAVISON
Miami

Drug traffickers arrested in Miami have told investigators they smuggled almost three tons of cocaine - worth around £30m on the street - through Havana with the approval of Cuban leader Fidel Castro, the *Miami Herald* reported yesterday.

The paper quoted unnamed "sources close to the investigation" as saying that evidence against Mr Castro was "already greater than the evidence that led to the drug indictment of former Panamanian strong man Manuel Noriega in 1988". The US invaded Panama the following year and snatched Gen Noriega, who he is now serving a 40-year sentence in America.

The drugs are said to have arrived in Havana aboard a Colombian freighter which off-loaded a cargo of soap, toothpaste, shampoo and toilet paper - scarce because of the US embargo. Protected by a Cuban gunboat, the drugs were shifted to power boats which then sped to the Florida Keys 90 miles away.

A Cuban embassy spokesman in Washington described the *Herald* report as "an outrageous lie". Pro-Castro Cubans



Fidel Castro: 'Link to drugs'

said that the front page story was aimed at "staining" the Cuban leader on the eve of Cuba's biggest national holiday, Cuba's independence day, on which Mr Castro usually gives his state-of-the-nation address. It marks July 26, 1953, on which Mr Castro launched his rebellion with an attack on a Havana military barracks, six years before his revolution finally triumphed.

The *Herald* story went on to quote "other sources" as saying

"Investigators have not been able to obtain a 'smoking gun' that establishes Castro's involvement", adding that he was unlikely to be named in an indictment.

Mr Castro's brother Raul, head of the Caribbean island's armed forces, has been named in previous US narcotics indictments. At Gen Noriega's trial, former Colombian drug baron Carlos Lehder, himself serving a long term in the US, testified that Raul Castro had given him permission to smuggle cocaine to the US via Cuba.

Both Castro brothers have dismissed such reports as anti-Cuban propaganda. Four senior Cuban army officers and intelligence officials were executed after a show trial in 1989 for alleged drug trafficking.

The *Miami Herald* often leans towards Florida's large community of vehemently anti-Castro Cubans who fled the 1959 revolution, many of them influential in Florida and federal politics.

The drug arrest took place in Miami in January when police, following a tip about smuggled Cuban Cohiba cigars, raided a warehouse and found nearly three tons of cocaine. One Colombian and several Cuban

Americans were detained, including 40-year-old Jorge Luis Cabrera, nicknamed "el Gordo" (the fat man), whose family owns a lobster and crab business in the Florida Keys.

The main basis for the supposed Castro link was alleged to be photographs found in a suspect's car at the scene of the bust, said to show "the fat man" posing with Mr Castro.

Mr Cabrera's lawyer said his client had visited Havana as a freelance photographer/reporter for a Spanish-language Florida weekly. It seemed highly improbable that the shrewd Mr Castro would pose with a man with whom he was arranging a drug deal, or that the man or his alleged accomplices would carry such photographs in their car.

The *Herald* may have hit the nail on the head when, later in its story, it said that some of the alleged traffickers had begun co-operating with prosecutors in the spring, several months after the arrest.

"The incentive was great," the article said. "Implicating Castro could give the defendants great leverage in getting their sentences reduced or avoiding prosecution altogether."

Jilted doctor 'gave woman HIV jab'

DAVID USBORNE
New York

The trial has opened in Louisiana of a doctor who is accused of retaliating against a long-time girlfriend who was trying to break off the relationship by injecting her with HIV-infected blood that he drew from one of his patients.

Dr Richard Schmidt is being charged with attempted second-degree murder of his girlfriend, a 33-year-old nurse, in a case that is gripping the Louisiana city of Lafayette, where he practised gastroenterology.

According to prosecutors, Dr Schmidt committed the crime in 1994 out of fury at his girlfriend who had been trying in vain to break off their 10-year relationship.

The woman, who has not been identified, had for years been voluntarily accepting injections of vitamins from the doctor to help with fatigue.

Lafayette police allege that Dr Schmidt drew blood from a patient he was treating who had the HIV virus, which causes the disease Aids, and took it to the woman's home.

He told her that the syringe contained Vitamin B12 and

urged her to let him perform the injection.

Prosecutors said the woman was in bed at the time and refused to agree to the injection. But the doctor allegedly insisted and injected her against her wishes.

"Before she could do anything more, he jabs her in the left arm," Michael Hanson, a US District Attorney, told the court.

"She never even sees the hypodermic. Next thing, he's leaving almost immediately."

The woman, who had no further contact with Dr Schmidt, later underwent a blood test which confirmed that she was carrying the HIV virus.

The charges against Dr Schmidt will be upgraded to second-degree murder if in the meantime she develops Aids and dies.

Lawyers for the doctor insist that he is innocent and the woman is pursuing a vendetta to bring him down.

During a prison visit, his wife recently declared: "He is a good man. He is not capable of doing this."

"People won't know all the good that he has done, and now this. He is ruined."

spectre
war loc
troops
capital

Burundi in chaos: Tutsi-led army installs new president in Bujumbura and fear of another Rwanda haunts the UN

Spectre of civil war looms as troops seal off capital in coup

DAVID ORR
Bujumbura

Gunfire and grenades yesterday sounded around Bujumbura, capital of the central African state of Burundi, in the wake of a military coup. The country has been teetering on the brink of chaos since the President went into hiding and the government began to disintegrate this week.

Now that the Tutsi-led army has installed a new regime, the spectre of ethnic conflict looms ever larger over Burundi.

Amid growing panic yesterday afternoon, Defence Minister Firmin Sinzoyiheba announced that the army was installing former President Pierre Buyoya in the office of President.

The streets were all but deserted as armoured personnel carriers and troop transporters raced about the city. All roads into Bujumbura were sealed off and inhabitants were ordered to go indoors. The TV and radio station was occupied by the military, while outgoing telephone communications were blocked.

A member of the Hutu community, returning on the last flight into the capital, said: "I'm going back to my death."

Belgium, the former colonial power, has put paratroopers on standby to evacuate the hundreds of Belgian citizens living in the capital. Earlier in the day the United Nations, which has been stressing the urgency of foreign intervention in the Burundian crisis, ordered all non-essential UN personnel to leave the stricken country.

The Defence Minister came on the radio to say that the decision had been taken because of the grave unrest countrywide.

"In consideration of the fact that President Ntubunganya has effectively resigned, in consideration of the genocide prevailing in the country and given that no solution has been found among the politicians," said the Defence Minister, "the army has decided to introduce the new measures."

The parliament and all political parties have been dissolved. Demonstrations and strikes have been made illegal. The airport and borders have been closed. The capital is now subject to a curfew from 7pm to

5am. No time limit has been put on these strictures.

"Those who break the law," said the Defence Minister, "will be punished very severely."

Pierre Buyoya, the newly installed President, is a member of the Tutsi minority. He was President of Burundi from 1987 until 1993, when he lost the country's first multi-party elections to Melchior Ndadaye from the Hutu majority. In October 1993, within months of the largely Hutu Frodebu party



Ntubunganya: Resigned

'Those who break the law will be punished very severely'

— Defence Minister
Firmin Sinzoyiheba

winning the poll, Burundi's first freely elected Hutu president was assassinated. The Tutsi-led military coup was a failure, but more than 50,000 people were slaughtered in the fighting which followed. Since then Burundi has been sunk in a mire of ethnic conflict which threatens to engulf the country in genocide and civil war similar to that which caused the death of up to 1 million people in neighbouring Rwanda in 1994.

Hundreds of people are being killed every month in ethnic fighting, some by Hutu rebels, others by Tutsi extremists. Following last weekend's massacre at Bugendana in central Burundi, another massacre

of Tutsis by Hutu rebels has been reported at Rumonge, 40 miles south of the capital. The number of casualties is unknown.

Repeated calls by the UN for a peace-keeping force to be deployed in Burundi have gone unanswered by the international community.

A regional security initiative, agreed by the country's leaders at a summit in Tanzania last month, was stalled by the government that has just been overthrown.

President Sylvestre Ntubunganya has not yet emerged from the US ambassador's residence, where he sought sanctuary with his wife on Tuesday evening. Mr Ntubunganya was nearly lynched on Tuesday afternoon at the funeral of 350 members of the minority Tutsi community massacred by Hutu extremists last weekend.

There were rumours that the President was about to seek asylum in neighbouring Tanzania. But a US embassy spokesperson confirmed yesterday that Mr Ntubunganya was still in the capital and would remain in the ambassador's residence for the time being. The US has repeatedly warned the Tutsi-dominated army that it will not tolerate a coup in Burundi, and will not recognise any regime installed by force.

Before the coup, Hutu ministers in the doomed government sought sanctuary in European embassies in the capital. The Speaker of Parliament, Leonce Nyendakumana, and the Foreign Minister, Venerand Bakayumusa, are understood to be in the German embassy. The Minister of Finance, Salvator Toyi, is in hiding at the residence of the European Commission's head of delegation. The Belgian embassy has received Mrs Ndadaye, widow of the assassinated president. The president of the Frodebu party, Jean Minani, has fled to Kenya.

President Ntubunganya had told his American host that he wished to remain in office, and in the last few days he has been pleading with the military not to intervene. However, by yesterday, as he failed to come out of hiding, his position had clearly become untenable.



Despair: Two girls, whose mother was one of more than 300 civilians killed by Hutu rebels in the central Gitega province, comforting each other after identifying her body

Photograph: Corinne Dufka/Reuters

History of ethnic tension between Hutus and Tutsis in one of world's poorest countries

These are some key facts about Burundi, which was yesterday in the throes of a coup, after a massacre at the weekend in which more than 300 civilians died.

POPULATION: An estimated 5.6 million. The largest tribe is the Hutu, who account for about 85 per cent. The Tutsi make up about 15 per cent. There are small numbers of the pygmy Twa. Hutus and Tutsis speak the same language. Discrimination in favour of the Tutsis assure them control of government and army for most of the time since independence from Belgium in 1962.

RELIGION: More than 60 per cent of the people are Christian, mostly Catholic. The rest mainly follow traditional religions, although 1 per cent of the population is Muslim.

CAPITAL: Bujumbura, population about 180,000. Most Burundians live in the densely-populated countryside.

ARMED FORCES: The army has about 22,000 men. The 150-man air force has three combat aircraft while a navy of 50 men has three patrol



On the run: Demonstrators in the streets of Bujumbura yesterday

boats. There is also a 1,500-man gendarmerie. Tutsis dominate the security forces.

ECONOMY: It is one of the world's poorest countries with per capita income estimated by the World Bank at \$259 (£170) a year.

HISTORY: Tribal hatred has exploded several times since independence. An estimated 100,000 people, mainly Hutus, were massacred in 1972. Burundi was governed by Tutsi military men after Captain Michel Micombero overthrew King Ntare V in 1966. Micombero ended the system of alternately

appointing Hutu and Tutsi prime ministers and helped the Tutsis consolidate control. Micombero was overthrown in 1976 by Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, whose 1977 land reforms put an end to Tutsi feudal overlords. Pierre Buyoya, who ousted Bagaza in a bloodless coup in 1987, named a Cabinet divided between the two tribes, giving Hutus their first real voice in government in 20 years and naming the first Hutu premier since 1965.

In the first free elections, in 1993, he was beaten by Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu who garnered most of the votes of his majority tribe allowed to vote for the first time. But elements in the Tutsi army refused to accept a Hutu leader and they staged a failed coup in October 1993, assassinating Ndadaye and other leading Hutus.

Ndadaye's murder unleashed a wave of Hutu-Tutsi slaughter throughout Burundi in which up to 50,000 people were killed.

Cyprien Ntaryamira, a Hutu who succeeded Ndadaye, was killed on 6 April 1994 along with Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana in a rocket attack on their plane. Sylvestre Ntubunganya, a Hutu, became interim president from April and was sworn in as president in September 1994 in a power-sharing deal called the Convention.

Western nations loath to intervene

DAVID USBORNE
New York

The United Nations Security Council agonised yesterday over what to do to prevent the turmoil in Burundi exploding into all-out civil war as the main Western powers continued to show no willingness to contribute ground troops to any intervention force.

The Council is haunted by events in neighbouring Rwanda in 1994, when conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes led to the massacre of hundreds of thousands. Neither has it forgotten the largely disastrous UN peace-keeping efforts in Somalia and Liberia.

The UN Secretariat has, meanwhile, said it is trying to assemble a military force which could be sent to Burundi to restore order and prevent further killings.

The effort is being led by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping, Kofi Annan, a Ghanaian, who envisages a force of perhaps 20,000 soldiers that could attempt to create areas in which members of the different tribes could find shelter.

"We have to move very quickly before everything blows up in our faces," Mr Annan said



Clinton: Cautious

in New York.

"As it is, history will judge us rather severely for Rwanda. I don't think we can repeat that experience in Burundi. What we need and what we are seeking now is the political will to act." He suggested that any force should be UN-funded.

However, Mr Annan knows that without the commitment of troops and military leadership by one of the Western powers, preferably the United States, Britain or France, putting together a sufficiently credible force will be difficult.

He noted that the UN erred in both Somalia and Bosnia in the early stages of both operations by sending in only 50 unarmed observers.

So far, however, there is still no sign of any Western government reversing public statements vowing to keep their troops out of Burundi. The US and Britain have sent military experts to the area and have offered to provide logistical and transport assistance should any force be created.

"It is the Somalia-Liberia scenario all over again," a Western diplomat said. "Nobody in Burundi wants outside intervention, so do you impose yourself? And if you do, what is your mission when you get there?"

President Bill Clinton, who faces elections this year, will be especially cautious of involvement in Burundi.

After weeks of canvassing governments about a peace-keeping force, Mr Annan has so far mustered commitments for a battalion each from Malawi, Chad and Zambia.

He hopes additional troops can be provided by the countries most involved in regional political efforts to find a settlement, namely Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda.

Leading article, page 15



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SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Within three hours two accidents hit one of Ukraine's five nuclear power stations, killing a man, causing contamination and sparking new worries about safety 10 years after the Chernobyl disaster. A worker died of burns and other injuries when a pipe carrying steam broke and struck him at the Khmelnytsky station in western Ukraine. In a second incident, a staff error caused radioactive water to leak in to, and contaminate, a nitrogen storage area. *Reuters - Kiev*

The jury in Australia's backpacker murder trial spent its second night confined to a Sydney hotel last night as they worked towards a verdict on Ivan Milat, the 31-year-old road worker charged with the murders of seven backpackers, including two British women, Caroline Clarke and Joanne Walters, and with the kidnapping of another Briton, Paul Onions. *Robert Milliken - Sydney*

Chinese officials sent out more volunteers yesterday to reinforce exhausted troops lining the Yangtze river as it threatened to burst its banks. Floods have already killed more than 1,100 people. In north-west Xinjiang, officials air-dropped food to residents trapped by some of the worst floods in the region for 300 years. *Peking - Reuters*

Minutes after he was stunned by a bolt of lightning that knocked him down in a street, a Namibian man was struck and killed by a passing car. The Namibian said that David Mushikele, 26, died instantly when hit by the vehicle, which then sped away. *AP - Windhoek*

Defending his advice to drink bleach, a Hong Kong Christian sect-leader, said: "The Bible has reference to living water... rain has hydrogen peroxide." The Rev Leung Yat-wah was addressing a packed news conference at his Church of Zion, having caused a stir for telling his followers that hydrogen peroxide could cure everything, from sore throats to AIDS. He took no heed of warnings from doctors about the dangers. *Reuters - Hong Kong*

A mentally handicapped Italian had his disability pension cancelled when he told doctors his favourite soccer star was Fiorentina's Argentine striker, Gabriel Batistuta. Antonio Criscuolo, 20, had been receiving 750,000 lire (£312) a month since the age of five, but doctors on a review panel decided to withdraw the money on the grounds that he was obviously capable of receiving and retaining information. *Reuters - Rome*

Indonesia fears a crackdown

Jakarta — "Before the trouble started, this place used to be very clean," my guide to the headquarters of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), assured me. "But there are three, sometimes four hundred people sleeping here now and it's become, well, rather dirty."

This was a considerable understatement. The high, tiled rooms of the bungalow are sickly with the smoke of clove cigarettes, and the meeting rooms are a clutter of orange peel and empty pop bottles. Grubby youths in red T-shirts and berets sleep sprawled on mats on the floor, and in a chaotic front office, middle-aged party workers manoeuvre between fax machines, bags of rice, and megaphones.

Posters and slogans cover the walls, and red banners are draped over the compound's metal gates. The party emblem, a black ox with long horns, and the portrait of a dark-haired woman wearing a white headscarf, are everywhere. "The illness of democracy can be cured by MORE democracy," reads one slogan. "More democracy in Indonesia is Megawati and her followers' struggle," says another.

The PDI's bungalow looks like a building under siege. The reason is that for the past month it has been at the centre of a bitter dispute which began as a leadership squabble, and rapidly escalated into a serious challenge to Indonesia's 30-year-old government.

The trouble began a month ago at the PDI's official congress on Sumatra. Politically, Indonesia is a cunningly bred hybrid, a one-party state legitimised by its tolerance of a limited party system. For three decades, the country's politics have been dominated by Golkar, which styles itself as a "functional group", but is, in all intents and purposes, the ruling party. Only two other groups participate in elections — the Muslim United Development Party, and the Christian-oriented PDI.

The opposition parties, like the elections, are closely controlled. In 1993 the PDI elected, as chairman of the party, Megawati Sukarnoputri, after the government got rid of the previous incumbent.

Opposition may pay high price for defying Suharto, reports Richard Lloyd Parry

The newcomer, however, is the daughter of a national hero, the former president, Sukarno, who was replaced by President Suharto after a coup in 1965.

Ms Megawati's growing popularity quickly made her even more of a headache than her predecessor. So, at the end of last month, the government turned the tables once again and had the former PDI chairman, Suryadi, re-instated.

Beneath the facade of stage-managed democracy, the Suharto regime has a long, grim record of snuffing out challenges to its power. Mangara Siahaan, a member of the



Streetwise: Soldiers side with demonstrators supporting ousted PDI leader, Megawati Sukarnoputri. Photograph: AP

are rallying in support of their ousted leader, occupying the PDI headquarters, and, irritating not just the government but the military, too.

PDI executive committee, emphasised the party's loyalty to Suharto, but stressed that they wanted their "independence, the right to organise the party without government interference".

A younger man at the bungalow cut in: "We are tired of them. They are afraid of Megawati because they know

she is like a snowball, becoming greater and greater. Suryadi is just a puppet, and Suharto is greedy and afraid."

The Indonesian government has been on its best behaviour this week while 25 foreign ministers gathered in Jakarta for the meeting of the Asean regional forum on security. But now the visitors have left, the

rumour is that this weekend the army will make its move on the PDI headquarters.

There are lots of police already outside the bungalow, and the boys in the red berets are sharpening their bamboo sticks. "Our fight is with Suryadi, nobody else," said my guide. "We're not fighting the government, nor the army."

Army masses for assault on Tigers

Colombo (Reuters) — Tamil Tiger rebels said yesterday that Sri Lankan troops were massing for a major offensive against guerrilla bases close to an army camp overrun by the separatist organisation last week.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam estimated 2,000 troops had massed on a beachhead a mile from the north-eastern garrison at Mullaitivu. "Troop reinforcements are now consolidating their position in preparation for a major counter-offensive," said the statement from London.

The army confirmed its planes were hitting guerrilla positions. The Tigers said that air force bombers, helicopter gunships and naval gunboats were attacking their positions but with few casualties.

"LTTE fighting units are well positioned with heavy weapons to meet the imminent offensive which might take place soon," the statement said. "Troops recaptured the base on Wednesday after the camp was overrun by the Tigers last week. Both sides say hundreds died in the week-long battle, one of the

fiercest in Sri Lanka's 13-year ethnic war.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan police detained 27 suspected Tamil rebels for questioning after two bombs killed at least 78 commuters and injured at least 450 on a packed train in Colombo on Wednesday.

The state-run Observer newspaper said the suspects were held following a police raid in the predominantly Tamil district of Wellawatte in Colombo. Police suspect the bombs were in three briefcases in the train.

The Tigers' statement from

London said that the government was trying to whip up anti-Tamil emotions by blaming the guerrillas, fighting for a separate homeland for minority Tamils in the north and east.

"Even though the accusing finger is pointed by the government at the LTTE, there are interested parties within the Sinhala ruling establishment who feel the need to raise chauvinistic hysteria in order to facilitate the military option," it said.

"We also wish to reiterate that it is not the policy of the LTTE to attack civilian targets."

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Photograph: AP

Victims of apartheid lose right to put killers on trial

Amnesty wrecks hopes of activists' families, writes Mary Braid

Johannesburg — The families of the murdered anti-apartheid activists Steve Biko and Griffiths Mxenge yesterday lost their bid to insist that crimes committed in the apartheid era must remain punishable by law.

The landmark ruling by the Constitutional Court means the Truth and Reconciliation Commission can continue to offer an amnesty — and indemnity from criminal charges and civil claims — to torturers and murderers from the apartheid era if they come forward voluntarily, freely confess and can prove that their crimes were politically motivated.

The relatives of Mxenge and Biko were among five families to challenge the constitutionality of the Commission, which was set up by the Government of National Unity in order to uncover the truth about the apartheid years and heal a divided nation.

The families, whose relatives were all allegedly murdered by the government security forces, argued that the Commission was an instrument of political expediency and that its amnesty powers robbed them of a chance to obtain real justice through the criminal and civil courts.

They said the state was ignoring its obligation under international law to "criminalise, prosecute and punish war crimes and crimes against hu-



Victim and perpetrator: Steve Biko and Dirk Coetzee

manity". Instead, after a few tears and an apology to the relatives, the guilty men have walked free.

For the last three months, at emotional public hearings throughout the country, victims and perpetrators have told harrowing stories of brutality. In their unanimous ruling the 10 Constitutional Court judges said without an amnesty there would be a "disincentive for the disclosure of the truth".

Mosibudi Mangena, president of Azapo, the black power organisation which backed the court challenge, said yesterday that the families were

"very sad" about the decision but that action in the international courts would be considered.

Biko's widow, Nisiki, 49, said she was "very frustrated". In 1977 her husband, then the young leader of the black consciousness movement which had swept South Africa's townships, was almost beaten to death by police officers before being driven 700 miles to a jail in Pretoria where he then died.

Mxenge's brother, Chubbill, was also bitterly disappointed. His brother, Griffiths, a civil rights lawyer, was stabbed 40 times and had his throat cut

after stopping to help some men who pretended that their car had broken down.

Last week, after months of lobbying, Churchill Mxenge had the satisfaction of seeing Dirk Coetzee, a former security forces captain, being charged along with four others for his brother's murder. However, the Constitutional Court's judgment appears to undermine the chances of that case ever reaching the courts.

Mr Coetzee confessed in 1989 to playing a part in Mxenge's murder. But he was never charged. The South African government denied Mr Coetzee's allegations that Mxenge's murder and many others were carried out by government-backed hit squads.

Mr Coetzee defected to the ANC before making his confessions. He has since rejoined the security forces as an ANC appointee and applied months ago for amnesty. He was waiting for his submission to be considered when he was charged. He has warned that his predicament may prevent other security forces personnel from coming forward.

Yesterday's judgment opens the way for the Commission's amnesty committee to announce the findings of the applications it has already heard.

This should clear up the uncertainty among the perpetrators of human rights crimes about the extent of the amnesty's provisions. So far the Commission has had a soft-softly approach to perpetrators of crimes and there has been widespread criticism that too few have come forward.

The gloves are likely to come off if the numbers do not rise. Perpetrators risk their names coming up at hearings and being ordered to appear before the Commission. Those who have to be coerced face prosecution in the criminal courts.

It is the second legal victory for the Commission. It won an appeal in the Supreme Court last month, which allowed it to name the perpetrators of human rights violations at public hearings without prior warning being given to the accused.

The latest challenge to the Commission had only a slim chance of success, as the establishment of the Commission and the amnesty provisions in particular were crucial components of South Africa's negotiated settlement.

The Commission has powers to compensate victims of crimes and their families, but with so many abuses to investigate, there are unlikely to be many cases of financial reparation.

Six die in Turkish hunger strike

Ankara (Reuters) — The death toll in Turkey's two-month prison hunger strike rose to six yesterday, turning the spotlight on the country's human rights record.

The six were part of a group of more than 300 left-wingers in around 30 jails who have pledged to fast to the death to demand the closure of Eskişehir prison — dubbed the Coffin by inmates — and protest against general prison conditions.

Dozens of hunger-strikers were reported by lawyers to be in a critical condition. So far, there has been little discussion of force feeding the inmates — partly out of fear of sparking widespread prison unrest.

Human rights workers said Mujdat Yanat, 37, died in Turkey's western Aydin prison, where he was serving an 18-year sentence for armed left-wing activities.

Earlier, inmate Ali Ayata died in Bursa prison, and Huseyin Demircioglu starved himself to death in Ankara central prison, according to lawyers and rights activists. Three other hunger strikers died earlier this week.

The prisoners and their lawyers also accuse prison officials of dispersing left-wing prisoners across the country, depriving them of family visits and legal counsel.

Justice Minister Sevkettin Kazan, criticised by prisoners' families for an apparent lack of will to stop the protest, promised that jails would soon be back to normal.

"We will bring peace to the prisons as soon as possible," he said at a municipal ceremony in Istanbul. He did not say what measures would be taken.

"The Government's Disgrace," said secularist daily, *Milliyet* on its front page, highlighting the risks for Turkey's new Islamist-led coalition.

Mr Kazan, of the Islam-based Welfare Party, has so far refused to close Eskişehir, saying conditions there exceeded Western standards, and arguing that its individual cells kept leftist prisoners under control.

Most Turkish prisons rely on large open wards, which officials say are difficult to monitor.

Czech PM wins vital confidence vote

ADRIAN BRIDGE
Central Europe Correspondent

The Czech Prime Minister, Vaclav Klaus, yesterday heaved a sigh of relief as his centre-right coalition government survived a crucial vote of confidence almost two months after a general election saw it narrowly lose its overall majority.

The outcome of the vote was in doubt right to the end and was only made possible by mass abstentions by the opposition Social Democrats, who hold the balance of power.

Yesterday's triumph makes Mr Klaus the only conservative leader from Central Europe to

win a second term of office following the fall of Communism in 1989.

But although his position in the saddle has thus been confirmed, he faces a bumpy ride.

"The confidence vote was just the beginning," said Jiri Pehe, research director at the Prague-based Open Media Research Institute. "Now the real battles are going to begin — and they will be fought over each new law."

Under a deal brokered by President Vaclav Havel, the Social Democrats agreed to "tolerate" the Klaus-led government in exchange for several key parliamentary positions.

But even in the run-up to yesterday's vote, party leaders were making it clear that they expected some real influence over policy.

In the government programme now formally approved, the priorities include pressing for early Czech membership of the European Union and Nato and more privatisation, deregulation and liberalisation of prices. It also cites lowering inflation and cutting income-tax levels as key goals.

While in broad agreement with the general thrust of the programme, the Social Democrats are opposed to many of its details, in particular plans to introduce tuition fees at universities and patient contributions for health care, now funded by the state.

Opposition MPs are also angered by government plans to return to the Catholic Church more than 430,000 acres of forest land confiscated during the Communist takeover in 1948.

With Mr Klaus's coalition holding 99 of the parliament's 200 seats, its position will be in constant jeopardy and it will find itself forced to adopt more moderate positions.

The same will be true of the Prime Minister, a man not known for his fondness for compromise and someone who makes no secret of his admiration for Baroness Thatcher, right down to sharing some of her Euro-sceptic views.

In the short-term Mr Klaus's government is likely to survive because there is no credible alternative. Despite having 61 seats, the Social Democrats have categorically ruled out trying to form an alternative coalition with either the far-left Communists or far-right Republicans.

But with no love lost between the two main sides, few in Prague are putting money on the government lasting a full four-year term.

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Should the West remake broken African nations?

How the world is letting Burundi die ran a line on our news schedule yesterday. The phrasing expresses the sense of impotence and anger evoked by news, yet again, of massacre and impending anarchy in that so fertile yet so inhospitable corner of Africa occupied by the nations of Rwanda and Burundi. The General Secretary of the United Nations, in a letter to the president of the Security Council, said reports from Bujumbura – an attractive town on the shores of Lake Tanganyika – underlined the urgency of the international community's need to stop the cycle of violence. Tutsi reprisal for Hutu massacre, Tutsi massacre for Hutu reprisal.

But the world is not an operational entity. The "international community" means, for most practical purposes, the United Nations. The UN, however, is technically bankrupt. Its chief – General Secretary Boutros Boutros Ghali – looks likely to lose his job. (The British overseas aid minister, Lady Chalker, could not even bring herself yesterday to say whether the Government was for or against him.) As for mobile military strength: there is no army of paratroopers to be magicked out of the US and dropped into Equatorial Africa. Nor, as the Clinton administration made clear yesterday, will there be. There is one French brigade available but that is about it. If the UN is not equipped to help, what about the

regional powers? There really are none. The Arusha declaration last month to the effect that Tanzania and other countries around Rwanda and Burundi would create a scheme of regional security remains a mere aspiration.

But even if the "world" or the "region" could muster battalions and logistical support – what then? Neither peace-making nor peace-keeping is enough. Tutsi and Hutu are not going to grow to love one another under the guns of foreign soldiers. There is no point in military intervention unaccompanied by something the world has not even begun to consider – the political and administrative makeover of an entire country, which might not even begin until that country had been broken up and in some way reconstituted.

Reports from Burundi are far from clear. President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya appears to have lost control but has not yet been deposed or exiled. The (largely Tutsi) army, assisted by Tutsi militias, is said to be seeking to catch the (presumed Hutu) perpetrators of the massacre at Bugendana: en route the army may well carry out reprisals against civilian Hutu, who form the vast majority of Burundi's inhabitants. Some kind of ceasefire between the Hutu insurgents and the Burundian government was being talked about but now looks out of the question. Diplomats in the capital are pessimistic about whether a bloody slide into

genocide can be avoided. Unless, of course, there is external intervention. But intervention on what authority? Under Chapter 6 of the United Nations charter, intervention is approved to keep the peace – but such action rests, implicitly, on the belief that Burundian political institutions can work, that agreements between warring parties can be made to stick, that Humpty can be put back together again. Intervention under Chapter 7 – to make the peace by force – implies breakdown in indigenous structures. And who is to take responsibility for remaking them?

This country, like its northern neigh-

bour Rwanda, lacks the infrastructure of politics as we know it – arenas for negotiation, the space for some compact between parties and tribes, between army and government, between executive and legislature. But political settlement cannot be imposed at gunpoint, even by black troops from Uganda or Zaire. Perhaps such a settlement is impossible on existing boundaries. Perhaps all conceivable solutions involve the deconstruction of both countries: is such a potentially colonialist act envisaged by those who call for intervention? Of late, a certain fatalism has become the fashion about Africa, or at least large

swathes of the continent; once again it is being referred to as "the black continent" in Western drawing-rooms. Even some liberals, tired of wringing their hands, now shrug their shoulders. Such fatalism sooner or later leads to the position: let them bleed. Even softened by aid programmes for refugees who make it to neighbouring countries, this sounds impossibly harsh. If that is what the West concludes, then we are worse people than our parents and grandparents.

There is an alternative, though it might prove equally unpalatable. It involves, first, a breach with the convention that limits involvement to aid or military might for humanitarian purposes. What if the settlement of tribal warfare in Rwanda and Burundi depended on organised "ethnic cleansing" – that is to say the compulsory resettlement of hundreds of thousands of people across boundaries, which are then redrawn to keep tribes apart? Would Western populations, however agitated by pictures such as those we carried yesterday, stomach their troops' staying on to move people from their homes?

The second aspect of this neo-interventionism is even less politically correct. For it involves efforts to rebuild civil society, to guide parties and populations in the right direction. What price colonialist "organised democracy" in black Africa orchestrated by the white powers?

These are hard questions and yet they need at least to have answers sketched

for them. If the Bugendana massacre leads, as in Rwanda, to a cycle of death and destruction, pressure for intervention will grow. Cynically put, it takes genocide to trigger action. But action will not be justified until its longer-run purposes have been thought through. Is "the world", or the West, or the UN, prepared to remake African nations?

Don't be prudish, this is business

Here's one for Michael Buerk and His Moral Mazers. The law says those in receipt of state benefits who are unemployed and able should be making every effort to seek work. From the autumn the rule gets even stiffer: no hard evidence that you are actively seeking work, no money. Now here comes the offer of a job which, though tacky, is perfectly legal – selling sexual services from home. Theoretically, there's no dilemma here. A government true to its principles and tough-minded on the limits of state interference should have no problem. One job is, the Tories constantly tell us, as good as another. But Eric Forth, a junior minister, has come over all prudish and banned copies of a paper carrying the sex ads. "Not suitable," he says. Ah, well. Not suitable for whom?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Oxford must not refuse £38m gifts

Sir: I find it hard to believe that anybody would send back fully paid-up gifts of £38m to the University of Oxford for a school of management studies. Professor Dawkins and others have to state clearly that if this sum is raised – and it is stated that £28m has already been obtained – then they would, in fact, still vote against the proposal to establish such a school and would return the cash. Such statements would prevent him and others from hiding behind an unwillingness to say that they are for or against management studies. It is just not possible to weigh up the Dawkins argument as to whether or not the money for management studies would otherwise be given for other causes. It is likely, however, that a really successful management school would attract much money to the university as a whole in the long term.

I sense that what lies behind the letters of Anthony Murray (24 July) and Richard Dawkins (25 July) is the old Oxford problem of attempting to preserve the old, while not willing to risk the new. I believe that a school of management studies of international standing to rival the business schools at say Harvard and Manchester should be an essential part of Oxford University activity in the next century. The understanding of how society can be managed everywhere in the world is the most pressing concern of us all.

I hope Professor Dawkins will fly his true colours, stating what he is for, and not prevent what others may consider to be essential by the ifs and buts of confusing discussion on money matters.

Professor R J P WILLIAMS
Wadham College, Oxford

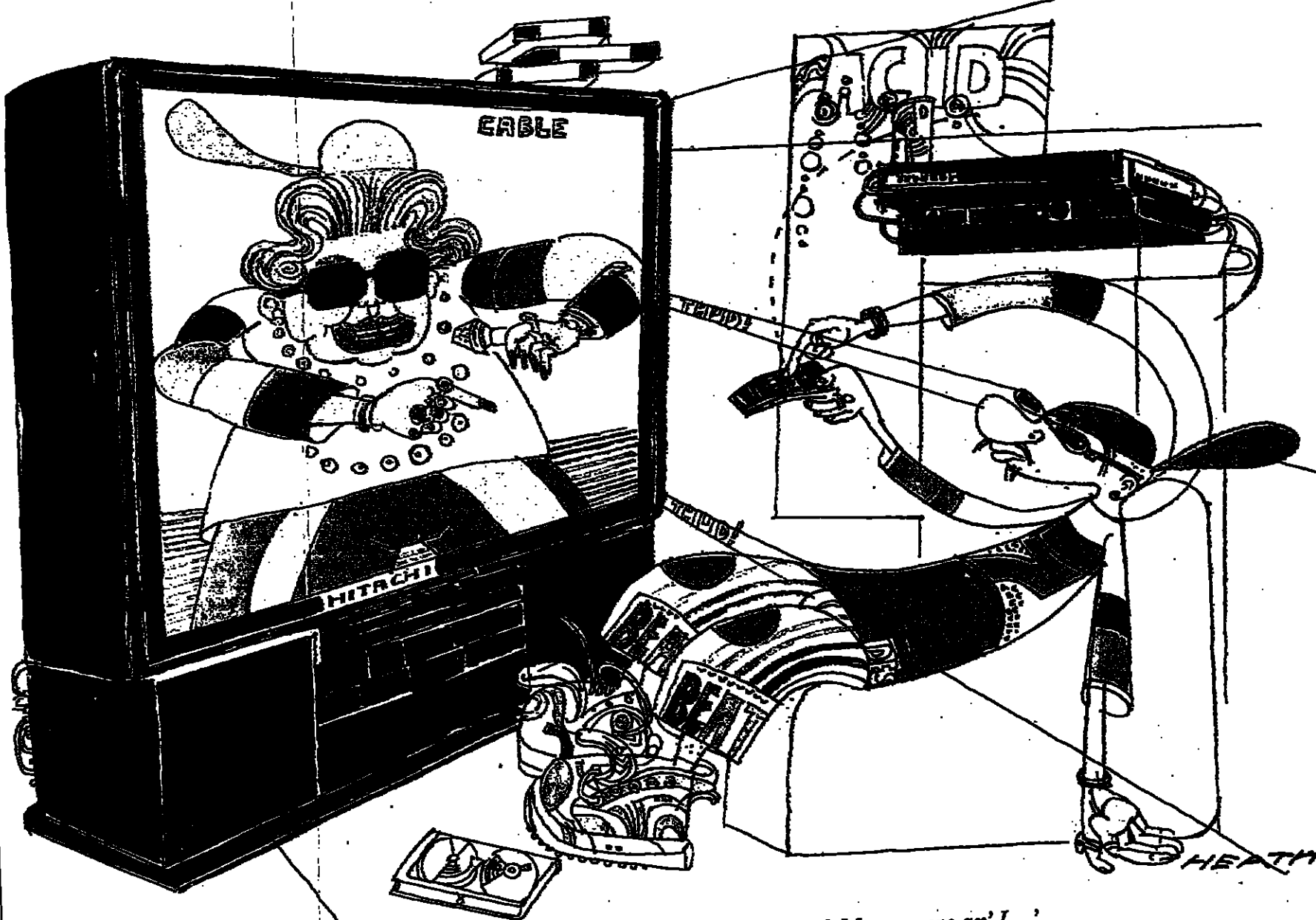
When Britain sent in assassins

Sir: It is untrue to claim, as Oleg Gordievsky does (letter, 24 July), that "the British intelligence and security services have never killed anybody". Before he died in 1990, the former MI6 officer and Unionist MP H Montgomery Hyde admitted that during the war his organisation had assassinated, in New York, a German seaman who was operating as a spy. In 1942, the French MI6 agent Marie-Madeleine Fourcade was ordered by MI6's Claude Dansey to kill a double agent called "Blanche". The cyanide pill failed but not the shot to the head.

During the late Forties there were numerous killings of double-agents among the émigré groups in the displaced persons' camps in the occupied zones of Germany. Carried out by trained assassins known as "mechanics", including a few from Scotland, these are understood to have been sanctioned by the British and American intelligence services.

While the idea of assassinations was officially shelved by 1950, it is worth recalling, on the 40th anniversary of Suez, that MI6's Operation Unifast consisted of at least six different assassination attempts against President Nasser. Whether it was incompetence or deliberate, fortunately the exploding razor, nerve gas, German mercenaries, poison and SAS all failed.

STEPHEN DORRIL
Holmfirth, West Yorkshire



Churchill the European

Sir: The fact that Winston Churchill was a strong Euro-federalist ("Top Tory comes out for the euro", 25 July) has been a well guarded secret among Conservatives for many years. But the truth was far worse for the anti-European lobby. On 17 June 1940 Churchill proposed that the French and British nations should be merged in an "indissoluble union" with a common currency, single citizenship and a full customs union.

The revelations on not stop there. The UN's International Labour Organisation (ILO) owes its existence to the War Cabinet member George Barnes MP and two British civil servants who drafted the ILO constitution. The first ILO convention in 1919 was to establish a maximum eight-hour day and 48-hour week. The British government voted for the motion.

Yet little Englanders still refer to the working time directive as an alien device constructed by dangerous progressives on the Continent.

ROBIN E J CHATER
Director
The EU Employers' Network
Guildford, Surrey

Sir: Whenever the subject of a single European currency is in the news, Europhobes like Lord Tebbit are wheeled out to parrot the equation "single currency equals single government". They are never challenged on the logic of this.

A single currency would necessitate a single policy on matters like interest rates and money supply. It is irrelevant to those aspects of financial policy in which most people are interested,

such as taxation and spending, and it is even more irrelevant to the whole range of social policy, industrial policy, constitutional policy, etc – nearly everything which normal political debate is about.

ALAN PAVELIN
Chislehurst, Kent

Cook's tough stance on Bosnia

Sir: Steve Crawshaw's comments on Robin Cook and Bosnia (article, 22 July) are unfair. Since taking over as Shadow Foreign Secretary, he has considerably toughened Labour's position on Bosnia. He called for stronger military presence during the crucial moments of the crisis. He has consistently condemned the Government for its weakness and vacillation.

More recently, Robin has called for the widening of I-For's mandate to include the seizure of war criminals such as Mladic and Karadzic. He is equally clear that I-For should be providing armed protection for the many refugees who wish to return to their homes.

The real frustration, of course, is that we are now condemned to another nine months of prevarication from the current UK government before we can get the chance to replace it with one that sees values and principles to be at the heart of foreign policy.

CALUM MACDONALD MP
(Western Isles, Lab)
Labour Friends of Bosnia
House of Commons

Rich, poor and meritocracy

Sir: Ian Corfield of the Fabian Society appears to have missed the point altogether in his attack on Peter Saunders' book *Unequal but Fair?* (letter, 23 July).

Mr Corfield argues that we do not live in a meritocracy because there is a widening gap between rich and poor, but this is irrelevant. The question is, are people becoming rich because they are talented and work hard, or because they are well-connected socially? And are they becoming poor because they are lazy and lacking in skills, or because they have come up against class barriers?

Professor Saunders argues, on the basis of a detailed analysis of data from the National Child Development Study, that although we do not live in a perfect meritocracy, intelligence and motivation are the two most important predictors of success.

Furthermore, Saunders argues that the size of any group defined as poor is less important than the degree of mobility between classes. Many of the poor, including the very poor, manage to lift themselves out of poverty by their own efforts, suggesting that class barriers are less important than some social scientists have argued.

If Ian Corfield has evidence to support a contrary thesis he should present it. Name-calling seldom advances any argument.

ROBERT WHELAN
Assistant Director
The Institute of Economic Affairs
London SW1

Ulster: only one extreme

Sir: I am an Austrian political science student specialising in conflict resolution. Having had the misfortune to witness recent events around the loyalist "marching season" in Ireland, I now realise the extent to which British propaganda has been effective regarding Irish issues. The British establishment press have for years portrayed police in the north of Ireland as finding themselves caught in the middle of two "Irish factions", thus depicting them as some kind of impartial force keeping the peace between two extremes.

There is only one "extreme" in the north of Ireland and that is the extreme right-wing sectarian fascism which is the very essence of loyalism. For example, General Law No 4 of the Orange Loyal Institution of Ireland states that "Any member dishonouring the Institution by marrying a Roman Catholic shall be expelled and it shall be deemed an offence for any member to facilitate in any way Sunday sports, amusements or dances by Roman Catholics."

This contrasts dramatically with republicanism as advocated by Sinn Féin, the essence of which is that supreme power be held by all the people or their elected representatives – a society with equality between its peoples.

While republicanism and loyalism are mutually incompatible, they cannot be simultaneously depicted as extremes.

F S MEYERBRUGGER
Graz, Austria

Trust in local democracy

Sir: Your leader on local democracy (23 July) echoed many of the views of the Liberal Democrats. Local people should decide how their own areas are run.

The Tories have shown they do not trust people to look after their own communities – they prefer quangos and centralisation. They have destroyed local services and deprived councils of power in an effort to retain control over them.

Their poor showing in local elections proves their policies are both flawed and disliked.

As Tony Blair made clear in his speech to the Local Government Association on Tuesday, Labour's plans for local government would in practice be equally prescriptive. It would seem both Labour and the Conservatives are determined to ensure that "local democracy" remains an oxymoron.

DAVID RENDEL MP
(Newbury, Lib Dem)
Liberal Democrat Local Government Spokesperson
House of Commons
London SW1

Goon slur

Sir: The Conservative candidate Jonathan Fine called the launch of the "New Labour, New Danger" slogan by Messrs Mawhinney and Heseltine a "stunt ... like *The Goon Show*". This will give offence to many *Goon Show* fans. We regard *The Goon Show* as intelligent, logical and highly entertaining.

DEREK SMITH
Sevenoaks, Kent

Getting out of the party bag

Sir: The answer to the dilemma "Forget the games, where's my party bag?" (article, 24 July) is simple – use your imagination.

For environment reasons (to avoid waste of resources on useless trinkets) I have never given out party bags. What I did do was to discuss with my daughter the cost involved and together we came up with alternatives. These included a £1 coin for each child in a plain brown envelope which my daughter named and decorated, and charging children £2 to attend a party disco. The money raised was donated to the NSPCC for children who can't afford parties at all.

It amazes me that parents always seem to follow the crowd for fear of the disapproval of children and other parents. This leads to raised expectations and increased cost of parties. You only had to see the look of delight on the children's faces as they left clutching their £1 coins to know that there's more to life than party bags!

MAGGIE TAYLOR
Pinner, Middlesex

Sir: This form of extortion is not new. In the late 1950s, when my youngest child was of school age, the pre-war habit again became established of bringing presents to the birthday girl or boy giving the party. The more affluent parents raised the standard of these to such an extent that eventually one brave mother wrote "No presents please" on her son's invitations. Far from being ostracised as mean, we, the less affluent, heaved sighs of relief and admiration and copied her.

VERONICA BERRY
Brentwood, Essex

Appeal of the cycle routes

Sir: A leaflet which accompanied my copy of the 23 July edition of the *Independent* invited me to contribute towards the cost of building the National Cycle Network by the charity Sustrans.

I am appalled that I even received the leaflet. Have we really become so car-obsessed that the Government is not prepared to invest in such a worthwhile project? What will happen if the National Lottery and individual contributions are insufficient?

I don't recall receiving requests for support for the further development of the National Road Network.

HAYLEY V NORTH
Leeds

Mindless males

Sir: Your interesting article on "theory of mind" (22 July) states: "Seeing leads to knowing ... if you are looking in a cupboard you know more about its contents than someone who is standing next to it."

This is a serious misconception, as can be proved by simple practical experiment. The theory does not explain why a male, gazing desperately into a cupboard looking for a pot of jam, is unable to see it, while his female partner 30 feet away is shouting, "On the left – it is staring you in the face!"

Can your correspondent identify which part of the male brain suddenly atrophies in this situation, causing temporary loss of sight and threatening the breakdown of many marriages?

HAROLD BREND
Hitchin, Hertfordshire

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(Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

analysis

Tied

This man was twice a victim: first, of medical negligence, second, of the law

Lord Woolf's civil justice reforms aim to change the expensive, unfair system that forced Michael Bolger to spend four years battling for compensation. By Patricia Wynn Davies

There must, surely, be something dramatically wrong with a system that sets a victim of devastating medical negligence to the excesses and stresses of the legal system for almost six years, and still leaves him nearly £100,000 out of pocket and with a strong sense of grievance.

After no fewer than 50 reports over the decades into improving civil justice, none of them acted upon, that was the familiar experience of Michael Bolger, once a senior personnel manager with ICI, now a paraplegic who works as best he can as a part-time consultant from his wheelchair – partly to occupy his mind, and partly to take his mind off the constant pain in his legs.

Mr Bolger is not unique. There are thousands more cases of all kinds dragging slowly through the civil courts with all that entails in cost and mental anguish. An unresponsive system has fallen into disrepute, and has lost the confidence of the public. Such are the pitfalls that many people, including those with some financial means, view the bringing of a claim as hopeless, or they abandon it in despair as rising costs or delays start gnawing away at any potential benefits.

The compensation that eventually emerged at the end of the process for Bolger – £1.6m – was vital in reconstructing a shattered life around his disability and in planning for an uncertain future. But, as so many victims of serious negligence will testify, the final result is only part of the story.

Compensation, as the description denotes but which is sometimes forgotten, is in no sense a windfall, and is at best an imperfect means of attempting to make up for horrendous losses. Pursuing litigation to obtain it generally, probably universally, serves to re-open the trauma on a different front. Most of Bolger's £1.6m will go on further adaptations to his house, more equipment to cope with the daily vicissitudes of life as a paraplegic, and as time goes on, on a full-time residential carer.

Like Lord Woolf, the Master of the Rolls, who unveils his civil justice reforms today, Bolger argues for nothing less than a complete change of culture. The present system seems to dictate that well-resourced defendants, and in Bolger's case a defensive med-



Michael Bolger: 'The test of a country's legal system is the way it deals with injuries to its citizens. If you can't get that right, what hope is there?'

James Cheadle/Solent News

ical profession, must do everything possible, including throwing large amounts of money at the problem, to hamper legitimate claims rather than tackle the reality, which must eventually come, of apportioning responsibility. Like Lord Woolf, Bolger has concluded that the present civil law system is too slow, too expensive, too complex and too complicated in case upon case, of varying complexity, in all branches of the civil law up and down the country.

Today's package will be the most radical set of reforms ever suggested, and if implemented

as a whole it will have a profound impact on the process of justice. It all depends on the detail, the resources for the extra judges and technology that will be required and, as important, a massive change of attitude among the legal profession. It began one Friday night when the Bolgers' car was hit on the A3. He had an unpleasant, though conventional, injury to his sternum from a seatbelt. He was discharged from hospital after a week, but had numbness in his right foot, difficulty in walking, pain in his abdomen and soreness at the site of the epidural injection. Every hour that was passing was clocking up lasting physical damage. The abscess that was eventually found between his shoulder blades was the size of a pancake.

The ghastly business of resorting to the law was about to begin. As Bolger tells it, the grief comes on two levels – the emotional, which the legal system as such does little about, and the practical, the hard, painstaking business of holding those responsible to account. Now that he is the contact point for Surrey and Hampshire in a national network being established by Action for Victims of Medical Accidents (the support group for victims

and their families), Mr Bolger speaks from the experience of many as well as his own.

"There would be the comment: you do know you are taking money from the NHS; whatever you get will have to come out of money for patients' treatment," he says. "What are you supposed to do? Just wheel away and take it?"

As he sees it, there are no "victories" for plaintiffs, just a remorseless grind as they juggle the business of preparing

feel undervalued because every single penny has to be fought for.

And what about the hidden victims? The legal process is too blunt an instrument to even begin to tackle the effects on families.

"Christine's whole life changed," Bolger says. "Her expectations about what we would do as a couple, her own routine and her ambitions, were shattered." The couple's three sons, now 30, 25 and 21,

had been about £90,000. With his lump sum and the sale of the family car he began proceedings, but had to change his solicitor after 16 months for someone less out of their depth.

Richard Vallance, of the London solicitors Charles Russell, had to begin all over again.

No fewer than five different judges dealt with the various aspects of the case as it ground through its stages, one in relation to costs alone, which itself took 18 months to resolve. Nine medical experts produced reports, four of whom were to give evidence in the trial. Seven more experts prepared opinions on the amount of damages. There were nearly three dozen experts for both sides, gearing up either to justify every penny or to pare down relentlessly any claim.

The trial was listed for four weeks, but the actual hearing only lasted three hours because, at that point – four years after the accident – there was an unconditional admission of liability on the part of the health authority and the consultant.

Bolger got his £1.675,000. But he had spent £310,000 in legal costs, £98,000 of which he was unable to recover from his opponents. The point is, says Bolger, that so much of it was unnecessary. "The judge said

the case should never have come to court."

But there had never been any without-prejudice negotiations about an out-of-court settlement. Bolger supposed that they were hoping he would give up and run out of money. It all seemed to be going at the pace of the slowest, most recalcitrant lawyer. The final details of the legal process were finally concluded six years ago last Friday.

Just before the trial was due to begin the defendants had paid a sum into court representing about two-thirds of what he eventually secured. If he had failed to beat it at trial he would have been liable to pay all the costs of both sides from that point onwards.

"It was a very unnerving experience," Bolger says. "I eventually felt he could not accept the offer. 'My biggest fear is that I am still only 53. I didn't want to end up in old age short of the essential funds.'"

For the reality of his injuries cannot be simply summed up in one neat word: paraplegic. The realities for paraplegics are things like double incontinence and for men, inability to ejaculate. Because he suffered an "incomplete" injury, Bolger also has the worst of both worlds, paralysis and pain, as the brain attempts to message the legs and feet through a damaged spinal cord. The pain is constant and unbearable, he says.

After trying acupuncture, electro-therapy and all the drugs known to experts, he has accepted that his pain gates just won't shut down. Under the guidance of David Grundy, who heads the Duke of Cornwall spinal treatment centre at Salisbury District Hospital, he is now weaning himself off his medication, which was affecting his ability to work. But as he gets older and weaker his ability to cope will deteriorate.

In complex cases such as this, Lord Woolf is expected to propose a new era of "case management", to ensure early and comprehensive discussion of what is really in dispute, what the costs are likely to be, the experts needed and the timetable. The main objective is to encourage early settlement, or if that fails bring cases to trial as speedily and economically as possible.

Bolger, who wrote a lengthy memorandum to Lord Woolf in the run-up to his report, is aware of some of the criticisms that have already been advanced. "I hope to goodness that we don't go to the other extreme, with half-baked settlements," he said. "But I had one of the best legal teams, and one of the most supportive GPs, and it still took that long."

"We need doctors who are more defensive, lawyers who are more accountable and a legal system that is much more fair and just to victims."

"The test of the quality of a country's legal system is the way it deals with injuries to its citizens, particularly in its hospitals. If you can't get that right, what hope is there for the rest?"

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Yes, Mr Reader, that number is yours and yours alone, and it is the key to your winning the prize in this great competition, which could net you as much as £500,000 or as little as £1!

All you have to do is memorise that number, so that if anyone approaches you in the street and says, "Do you know the magic prize-winning number as allocated to you in the Independent newspaper the other day?" you can look them straight in the face and say, "Yes, the number is 2985 746235419293994858969/98!" Our representative will then look at his notes. Mr or Mrs

Reader, and say, "No, I'm sorry, that's the wrong... No, hold on, I tell a lie, you've got the right number!"

Well, knock me down with a feather! Well done, Mr or Mrs Reader, you have won prizes worth half a million pounds in cash, that's a lot of money, you will probably need advice in investing it, and by extreme good luck I have here with me a financial adviser who will give you the best possible advice on how to invest that money, and I have a very strong feeling that what that adviser will tell you to do is buy old Department of Social Security offices cheap and flog them off for a quick profit!

In fact, so sure am I that that is his advice that I think you will find he has done that for you already, Mr Reader, and that the money has already been banked, though not in your name!

Of course, he may not say that to you at all. He may say, "Well done, you have won a prize of £500, that's not a lot of money compared with half a million but it's still a lot com-



Miles Kingston

pared with the average tip given to a taxi driver, and it so happens that I have a financial adviser here with me and I can arrange for him to give you advice on how to invest that £500!

In fact, I have a very strong feeling that I know already how he will advise you to spend that £500! I have a very strong feeling that he will urge you to spend it on a dinner date with the Prime Minister of England! Yes, with John Major himself, because for only £500 you can secure a place at dinner with the man they call the Premier of England!

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Margaret Thatcher: "I'm sorry, I don't talk to anyone for under half a million these days."

I tell you what, Mr Reader. Don't even bother with the lucky number.

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British Gas sues Government for £1bn

Embattled group files writ over tax payments

CHRIS GODSMARK
Business Correspondent

British Gas yesterday filed an unprecedented £1bn writ against the Department of Trade and Industry to claim back taxes which it said it should never have paid. The company fiercely denied suggestions that the audacious legal move was an attempt to lessen its difficulties over the £30bn-worth of so-called take-or-pay contracts with other gas producers.

The DTI responded by issuing "protective writs" against the 27 oil and gas companies which are the subject of some of British Gas's oldest contracts, written as long as 30 years ago. Little warning was given about the legal action, but the DTI immediately made it clear that the Government did not accept the validity of the claim.

This is the latest episode in British Gas's battle to protect

millions of privatisation shareholders, or "Sids", who have watched the share price slump by a third over the past year. Apart from the simmering take-or-pay problem, British Gas is facing the likelihood of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation over its acrimonious row with the industry regulator, Ofgas. The gap between the two sides over a controversial price formula, which would cut revenues from the pipeline business, Transco, by up to 28 per cent appears as wide as ever.

The legal claim relates to the Gas Levy, a tax created by the Conservative Government in 1981 to make up for the fact that existing contracts to buy North Sea gas were exempted from Petroleum Revenue Tax (PRT). This tax came into effect in 1975, and is levied on production profits made by oil companies. The legal action by

British Gas was the result of research by its in-house lawyers and the firm of Ashurst Morris Crisp, who had discovered what amounts to a legal loophole when examining one of the pre-1975 contracts last year. By Christmas they had widened their investigation into other contracts which pre-dated the introduction of PRT. Some had been amended so many times that British Gas's lawyers believe they had ceased to have any legal validity.

Technical provisions in the Gas Act 1986, which provided the framework for privatisation, created doubt about who these contracts apply to. The 1986 legislation suggests the Gas Levy could be paid by "other parties". It was subsequently amended in 1990 to suggest, in effect, that if British Gas itself was not liable, then the producers who sold the gas should be.

In a statement the DTI explained its counter writ against the producer companies, which include BP, Esso, Mobil and Shell. "The DTI does not believe that British Gas's interpretation of the law is correct. However it cannot ignore the risk, however small, that British Gas may prove to be right. If British Gas were proven to be right, then the Government would have to pay the gas producers a levy in the gas question."

British Gas issued the writ in the High Court yesterday, but it has yet to be formally served on the DTI. The company has up to four months to serve the writ. In a brief announcement the company said: "We are pursuing directly with the DTI the legal position. Accordingly, pending the outcome of the



Richard Giordano, chairman of British Gas: Fighting back on behalf of 'Sids'

process, no decision has been made as to whether or not to pursue these proceedings. Analysts suggested that this was an attempt to pressure the Government into abolishing the levy - 4p a therm - and amounting to about 1p a therm on consumers' gas bills. Levy payments have decreased over the past 10 years as the fields come to the end of their lives.

At its peak in 1985/86 British Gas paid £525m. Last year the levy was worth £150m, and it is estimated that over the next decade it could earn the Treasury around £1bn. Since 1981, the Gas Levy has netted the Government £5.6bn.

But there was doubt about the possibility of further negotiations taking place. In a letter sent by the DTI to the firms af-

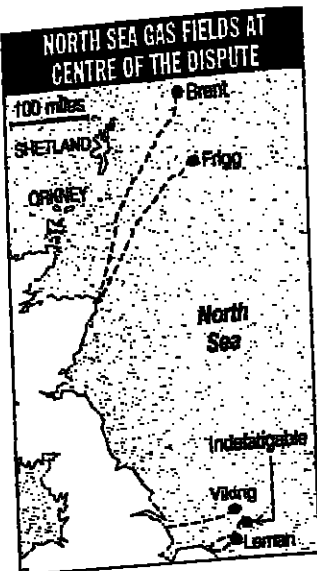
fecting by its protective writ, it said there were "no plans to enter into negotiations with BG." The companies affected were equally taken aback by the DTI writs. BP said it was considering the matter, but could not yet make any comment. Other firms said many of the directors who needed to be informed were on holiday.

Although the DTI did not ac-

cept British Gas's arguments, analysts suggested they must have some legal strength. Simon Flowers from Nat West Markets said: "They wouldn't have gone to the trouble of issuing a writ unless they genuinely believe there's a reasonable legal case." The claim is unlikely to come to court, but should British Gas gain a billion pound windfall, it may not be distributed to long

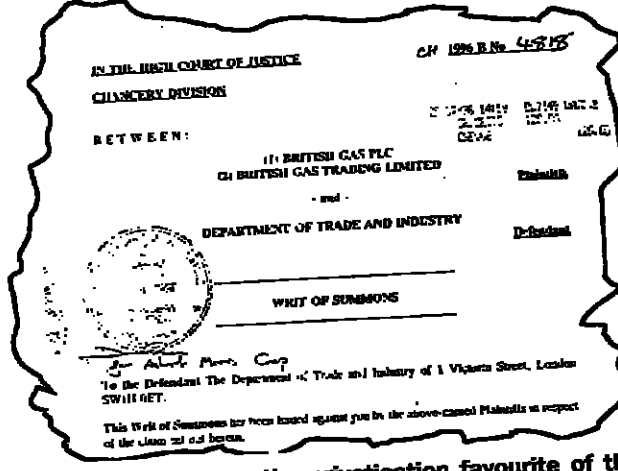
suffering "Sids". The Gas Consumers' Council argues that British Gas promised seven years ago to give any reductions in the levy to consumers. Ian Powe, the council chairman, said: "If British Gas wins, we shall remember its earlier promises." The legal move helped to boost British Gas shares, which gained 2p to 193.5p.

Comment, page 19



Gas Levy	
Year	Amount £m
1981/82	383
1982/83	471
1983/84	522
1984/85	500
1985/86	525
1986/87	515
1987/88	502
1988/89	407
1989/90	335
1990/91	291
1991/92	282
1992/93	287
1993/94	240
1994/95	175
1995/96	150
Total	5,685

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With this I thea sue: the privatisation favourite of the Eighties turns on the Government with record writ

ICI cuts 2,700 jobs as profits slump

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Imperial Chemical Industries is to shed a further 2,700 jobs as it accelerates its latest cost-cutting programme in a bid to counter a slump in demand and prices in its core industrial chemicals markets. Planned savings of £400m a year are now expected by the middle of 1997, a year ahead of schedule.

The company announced the targets yesterday as it shocked the City with a worse-than-expected 28 per cent drop in first half profits. The collapse from £510m to £367m was exacerbated by a £137m exceptional charge to cover the cost of the performance improvement programme, which was first announced in February.

Analysts, who had pencilled in profits of between £387m and £403m, were yesterday busy reducing expectations for the full

year to between £650m and £750m. In 1995, ICI's profits more than doubled to £927m. There was a luke-warm reaction from the City to the news. Jeremy Chantry, an analyst at Kleinwort Benson, said: "The management clearly are intent on looking at the performance and trying to improve it where they see fit." The shares, however, closed 17p lower at 761p, well down on their peak of 954p, achieved in April.

Hardest hit was ICI's industrial chemicals operation, which last year chipped in 60 per cent of group profits. This time the contribution tumbled from £298m to £121m as prices fell by as much as 40 per cent.

Charles Miller Smith, chief executive, described the problems in industrial chemicals as a pause rather than a slump, but he said the group was planning a long-term shift in emphasis away from commodity chemi-

cal towards less volatile materials and paints businesses. "It has been a tough and demanding year so far and profitability has suffered. Clearly we need to do more to improve the return," he said.

The move could involve asset sales of non-performing businesses and possibly spin-offs of operations and alliances with other manufacturers. Mr Miller Smith insisted, however, that the group's stated target of a 20 per cent return on net assets was still achievable, despite a fall in the ratio this year from 18 to 14 per cent.

Elsewhere in the group, performances were mixed. Paints profits grew from £47m to £70m despite what the company described as "generally difficult market conditions". Materials, such as polyurethanes and films, were also strong, with profits up from £86m to £115m.

ICI's regional businesses in



Charles Miller Smith and finance director Stan Spall: ICI's disappointing results have added greater urgency to their cost-cutting programme

countries such as Australia and Canada had a poor second quarter which left the profit contribution for the half year down £2m to £71m. The explosives operation was dogged by loss-

es in the US, and saw profits slide from £28m to £12m. Mr Miller Smith said of the US operation: "Our US operations are in loss and this must stop, so radical restructuring is

being implemented. We intend to concentrate on fewer sectors, withdraw from unprofitable sales and cut overhead sharply." Investment Column, page 21

Results warning as Philips axes 6,000

PETER RODGERS

Philips, the Dutch electronics group, is to cut 6,000 jobs in the first large scale redundancy programme since the company nearly went to the wall in 1991. The cuts led to a provision of £760m (£290m) in yesterday's second quarter figures, resulting in the first quarterly loss - of £456m after tax - since the 1991 crisis. Philips also warned the full year results would be down on last year's £1.583m.

The cuts are to be at manufacturing plants in its Sound and Vision business which employs 70,000 to make videos, televisions and similar equipment. After the initial shock in the Dutch stock market, there was a robust recovery in Philips shares from a morning slump, which ended £12.70 higher at £51.30 as analysts applauded the restructuring plans. Some of the jobs are to be relocated from Europe to cheaper manufacturing centres in the Far East

and low cost parts of Europe. Philips said.

Few redundancies are expected at Philips' UK plants. Philips' consumer electronics have been hit by poor sales trends which are plaguing all manufacturers in the industry, particularly in Europe.

Simon Street of Barclays de Zoete Wedd said: "It's not just Philips. We have not really had any major new products. If manufacturers finally agreed on a standard for the new digital video disc it could give the market a big fillip."

Dudley Eustace, Philips' finance director, said the "pay-back period" for the redundancies would be 18 months and they would be implemented as soon as possible.

Philips has shed 55,000 jobs worldwide since the peak of 330,000 at the end of the 1980s as part of a long term streamlining programme. But Sound and Vision was largely untouched by the earlier phases.

Second price cut to secure Somerfield flotation

NIGEL COPE

The ill-starred flotation of the Somerfield supermarket group finally looked set to go ahead last night after the price of the issue was dramatically cut for the second time in a week. The price was reduced from 160p to 145p to help satisfy institutional investors nervous about the jittery stock markets.

At that price the company is valued at £430m compared with £548m at the original valuation of around 185p. "We were going

to get this thing away, no matter what it took," one insider said.

Though an official announcement is not expected until this morning, it is thought that the offer will be fully subscribed. Barring last minute hitches the shares are expected to start dealing a week later than planned on 9 August.

Kleinwort Benson will not underwrite the offer until today. The revised offer was also conditional on a board meeting last night of the 150-scales parent

company which represents the company's debt holders.

Yesterday's price cut was the final act in an increasingly frantic attempt by the company's advisors to help get the troubled float away. It is understood that the brokers found that not only were orders not coming in but existing orders were being pulled due to worries about stock market turbulence.

Only institutions which had already applied for the shares were offered the lower price. It is thought that most of the

shares have ended up with just five with a yield of almost nine.

At these ratings the float has gained some fans in the City. "You have to say that at that price, it's pretty OK," one analyst said. He added that other companies' ratings such as Kwik Save now looked far to high. Somerfield, which is the former Gateway supermarkets, is the largest non-business issue of the year and has been by far the most troubled. It has been dogged by misfortune since the outset by

stock market gyrations followed by a profits warning from Iceland, the frozen food retailer, which precipitated the first price cut.

The retail offer to private shareholders closed on Friday though the company has not released details on the volume of take-up. Private investors will also be eligible for the lower, 145p price. Some analysts expect that if the float does go ahead as expected the shares will open at a premium close to the previous price of 160p.

MAM slashes fees for Cairn

PETER RODGERS

Signs of emerging price competition in the City's underwriting markets came yesterday when Mercury Asset Management took on the entire sub-underwriting for a £50m rights issue by Cairn Energy at a cut-price fee.

MAM, the City's largest fund managers, charged the oil exploration company 0.5 per cent, far less than the standard fee for sub-underwriting of 1.25 per cent. It also said it would take the stock on to its own books at the market price of 280p on Wednesday ahead of the announcement, rather than at the usual discount. MAM's funds already own 11 per cent of Cairn.

MAM is one of the staunchest City campaigners to preserve the traditional underwritten rights issue against new methods of raising capital promoted by some big investment banks.

These banks would like to water down or abolish pre-emption rights for existing shareholders and sell new share issues by hook-building or bought deals, in which they take all the stock on their own books.

The rights issue underwriting system favoured by MAM and its allies has been under pressure after an Office of Fair Trading inquiry commissioned from London Business School found the City overcharged heavily for its underwriting services.

A follow-up inquiry by the Bank of England disputed the scale of the excess fees but acknowledged that the problem existed.

The OFT urged companies to put pressure on the City to cut underwriting fees and introduce more competition into the market place but there have been few signs of breakdown in the 40-year-old fee structure, which allocates 0.5 per cent of the proceeds to the advisers, 0.25 per cent to the brokers and 1.25 per cent to the sub-underwriters.

In the background is a threat by the OFT to refer the whole question of underwriting fees and the cost of raising capital to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission this autumn.

There appeared to be no danger of MAM being left with the stock. The shares rose 38p to 318p after the announcement. Deutsche Morgan Grenfell is the adviser on the one-for-five rights issue at 280p.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996 High	1996 Low
FTSE 100	3684.70	+15.90	+0.4	3857.10	3632.30
FTSE 250	4205.30	+23.50	+0.6	4568.60	4015.30
FTSE 350	1846.50	+8.50	+0.5	1945.40	1816.50
FT Small Cap	2092.86	+4.21	+0.2	2244.36	1954.06
FT All Share	1827.38	+7.99	+0.4	1924.17	1791.96
New York	5464.63	+40.94	+0.8	5778.00	5032.94
Tokyo	2083.84	+252.81	+1.2	2266.80	1973.70
Hong Kong	10708.97	+7.11	+0.1	11594.99	10204.87
Frankfurt	2465.00	+17.20	+0.7	2583.49	2263.36

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling*

Month	Rate
Jan 1980	5.91
Feb 1980	5.80
Mar 1980	5.75
Apr 1980	5.75
May 1980	5.75
Jun 1980	5.75
Jul 1980	5.75
Aug 1980	5.75
Sep 1980	5.75
Oct 1980	5.75
Nov 1980	5.75
Dec 1980	5.75
Jan 1981	5.75
Feb 1981	5.75
Mar 1981	5.75
Apr 1981	5.75
May 1981	5.75
Jun 1981	5.75
Jul 1981	5.75
Aug 1981	5.75
Sep 1981	5.75
Oct 1981	5.75
Nov 1981	5.75
Dec 1981	5.75
Jan 1982	5.75
Feb 1982	5.75
Mar 1982	5.75
Apr 1982	5.75
May 1982	5.75
Jun 1982	5.75
Jul 1982	5.75
Aug 1982	5.75
Sep 1982	5.75
Oct 1982	5.75
Nov 1982	5.75
Dec 1982	5.75
Jan 1983	5.57

UK medium gilt

Month	Rate
Jan 1980	8.2
Feb 1980	8.1
Mar 1980	8.1
Apr 1980	8.1
May 1980	8.1
Jun 1980	8.1
Jul 1980	8.1
Aug 1980	8.1
Sep 1980	8.1
Oct 1980	8.1
Nov 1980	8.1
Dec 1980	8.1
Jan 1981	8.1
Feb 1981	8.1
Mar 1981	8.1
Apr 1981	8.1
May 1981	8.1
Jun 1981	8.1
Jul 1981	8.1
Aug 1981	8.1
Sep 1981	8.1
Oct 1981	8.1
Nov 1981	8.1
Dec 1981	8.1
Jan 1982	8.1
Feb 1982	8.1
Mar 1982	8.1
Apr 1982	8.1
May 1982	8.1
Jun 1982	8.1
Jul 1982	8.1
Aug 1982	8.1
Sep 1982	8.1
Oct 1982	8.1
Nov 1982	8.1
Dec 1982	8.1
Jan 1983	7.6

US long bond

Month	Rate
Jan 1980	7.1
Feb 1980	7.0
Mar 1980	7.0
Apr 1980	7.0
May 1980	7.0
Jun 1980	7.0
Jul 1980	7.0
Aug 1980	7.0
Sep 1980	7.0
Oct 1980	7.0
Nov 1980	7.0
Dec 1980	7.0
Jan 1981	7.0
Feb 1981	7.0
Mar 1981	7.0
Apr 1981	7.0
May 1981	7.0
Jun 1981	7.0
Jul 1981	7.0
Aug 1981	7.0
Sep 1981	7.0
Oct 1981	7.0
Nov 1981	7.0
Dec 1981	7.0
Jan 1982	7.0
Feb 1982	7.0
Mar 1982	7.0
Apr 1982	7.0
May 1982	7.0
Jun 1982	7.0
Jul 1982	7.0
Aug 1982	7.0
Sep 1982	7.0
Oct 1982	7.0
Nov 1982	7.0
Dec 1982	7.0
Jan 1983	6.6

*100% New Values Indicated

1 January 1983

Money Market Rates

Index	1 Month	1 Year
UK	5.75	6.00
US	5.34	6.06
Japan	0.47	1.31
Germany	3.28	3.06

*Benchmark Indices

Bond Yields*

	Medium Bond (%)	Year Age	Long Bond	(50) Year
UK	7.90	8.17	8.01	8.25
US	8.90	8.44	8.99	8.05
Japan	3.31	2.80	-	-
Germany	6.35	6.77	6.92	-

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Index	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change (%)	Falls	Price (p)	Change (p)	%
Salvagean Christian	349	60	20.8	Hays	414	26	5.9
Danica Business Sys	223	35	9.0	RUB Mining	485	20	4.0
Transport Dev Grp	217	15	7.4	Inspec Group	222	7	3.1

CURRENCIES					
£/\$		£/DM		£/¥	
1 £	1.5711	0.6422	160.36	1 £	160.36
1 \$	0.6363	0.1557	6.3596	1 ¥	0.0062
1 DM	1.5548	1.5548	1.5548	1 DM	1.5548
1 ¥	0.0062	0.0062	0.0062	1 ¥	0.0062

OTHER INDICATORS					
Yesterday's change		Year Ago		Index	
Oil Brent \$	19.25	+0.12	16.18	RPI	153.04
Gold \$	385.05	+0.85	395.50	GDP	130.4
£ Index	247.29	-0.04	241.82	Base Rates	5.75pc

Sids strike back – but will they win the war?



COMMENT

To the average man in the street this looks like a clear case of revenge. You break up our domestic monopoly, visit upon us a regulator from hell, leave us with a take-or-pay liability that will probably top £2bn and we will see you in court.

Sid strikes back. Or, there again, maybe not. British Gas says that the £1bn writ it fired off yesterday in the general direction of the Trade Secretary, Ian Lang, has nothing to do with the way its shareholders have been mugged over the last 12 months by a combination of government ministers and regulators. No, sire.

Simply protecting our rights under the statute of limitations. Come to that it will probably never even get to court if we can all be grown up and settle amicably.

Odd, then, that it has taken the company a decade to cotton onto the possibility that it has been massively overpaying gas levy to the taxman on North Sea contracts signed back in the 1970s.

Odd also that if British Gas should win, the Government has to counter-sue the North Sea oil majors to recover the money. Odd, too, that it is those self-same oil majors with whom British Gas is in dispute over £40bn of gas contracts for which it now, inconveniently, does not have customers. Odd, finally, that if it does come to court, British Gas may end up in effect suing itself since some of the contracts in question were signed with its own exploration arm.

Perhaps they have been on the laughing gas around at Dick Giordano's office for only someone with an out-size sense of humour could seriously suggest that British Gas's well-documented travails and yesterday's writ are unconnected.

To the average man in the street this looks

like a clear case of revenge. You break up our domestic monopoly, visit upon us a regulator from hell, leave us with a take-or-pay liability that will probably top £2bn and we will see you in court.

As British Gas so earnestly says, it may not come to that. Instead of sticking out for the £1bn tax rebate, it would probably settle for the abolition of future gas levy which, incidentally, would save about the same amount over the next decade.

But it is a rum way of going about things and one which was greeted with surprise and not a little irritation inside the DTI.

It is impossible to tell whether British Gas has a case that merits attention given the highly complex and technical nature of the claim it is bringing. Tax law is a minefield into which only those with the slickest of advocates enter.

In its tactics still look mighty peculiar. As in much as the Government has intervened in the talks between British Gas and the oil producers, it has made it plain that the vast liabilities faced by the company are a burden which should be shouldered as widely as possible.

Now, however, British Gas has chosen to pick a fight with the Government. It is already in conflict with its regulator, its customers and its suppliers and could soon be packed off to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

As many a general has discovered, opening up the battle on too many fronts is a sure-

fire way of losing the war. In this case the collateral damage would be among the Sids.

The route Bae might choose to fly

The sky was black yesterday with denials from British Aerospace and Daimler-Benz about a merger of their respective military aircraft businesses. Tommy taking over supplies to the Luftwaffe? What rot. The Hun would never stand for it. What's more they didn't win Euro 96 just to capitulate to the first Tornado squadron across the Channel.

Whilst it may be true that Bae is only engaged in specific talks about acquiring a slice of Thomson CSF's weapons business in France, the fact is that consolidation is now the buzzword. For two decades Europe's defence groups have muddled along by collaborating on important projects like Eurofighter, a compromise between the need for economies of scale and the demands of national procurement programmes.

But now the mega-mergers within the US defence industry, notably the Lockheed Martin combination, have forced the Europeans to revisit how best their own manufacturers might be grouped.

Bae has been at the forefront of this process, exploring the idea of joint ventures, mergers of peripheral functions and now

perhaps something on a grander scale. It will not be an easy task to cement alliances across Europe that involve one nation's defence capabilities being acquired by another. Chauvinism and continued state ownership of much manufacturing capacity on the Continent are two obvious deterrents.

Even exchange of minority cross-shareholdings, a concept examined at the beginning of the 1990s by Bae and Daimler, proved impossible to bring to fruition. So for all the talk, full-scale merger will probably remain a longer-term project. In the shorter term a profitable route for Bae to fly might be a merger with GEC – an alliance of airframe and defence electronics that would bring more potent benefits than any European tie-up. The resulting national champion might be a non-starter as far as the present administration is concerned. But in George Simpson, who takes over in six weeks at GEC, there is the man who could broker a merger. On present election timing, he would have just about the right amount of time to put a deal to Tony Blair's first Cabinet.

Frost to make Hays while the sun shines

Being smoked out by the Takeover Panel is never the best start to a takeover bid but if Ronnie Frost's Hays Group can secure the support of the Christian Salvesen board

for an offer at around £3.50 a share then no harm will have been done.

Hauling chilled chicken tikka masala and ladies dresses about the countryside may not be everybody's idea of excitement but if there is going to be a number one European logistics company then it might as well be Hays.

The customer fit looks good – they only overlap on Marks and Spencer and Tesco and even then they handle different products – as does the geographic match with Hays strong in Europe and Christian Salvesen in the UK.

Where the marriage is less compelling is in the baggage Christian Salvesen hauls in its wake. It may be a long way from its whaling and timber origins and it may have slimmed down radically under the present management. But it still has a heavy presence in the UK supermarket sector where the buying power of the likes of Sainsbury makes for low margins. Hays, by contrast, has cleverly built a network by acquiring unquoted companies across Europe where the power of the retailers is nowhere near as great.

Still Mr Frost is a canny operator and even if there is no agreed offer he can probably count on the support of the Salvesen family, who own around a third of the business and by all accounts, are restive with the present management. He promises he will not overpay, but how many times have investors heard that?

Hays sounds out £1bn takeover of rival Salvesen

NIGEL COPE

Hays Group, the distribution, personnel and document delivery company, has made a takeover approach for its 150-year-old transport rival Christian Salvesen, that would value the company at around £1bn.

Hays said yesterday it hoped it could achieve an agreed deal that would need the consent of the Salvesen family which controls 40 per cent of the shares. Christian Salvesen said the offer was unwelcome. However, Hays chief executive Ronnie Frost said he would not rule out "going hostile".

Analysts said the likely price-tag for Salvesen would be around 350p per share with some expecting the company to agree to the deal. "The company is aware of the need for consolidation in the sector," one analyst said.

If the deal went ahead it would make Hays, currently worth £1.7bn, an FTSE 100 company with a dominant position in the distribution sector.

Christian Salvesen shares soared from 289p to 349p while

Hays stock slipped back 26p to 414p. Hays said it had already held discussions with Christian Salvesen but was seeking further meetings. "We've been looking at the company for two years. This is not just a flash in the pan," Mr Frost said.

One problem is that Christian Salvesen chief executive Chris Masters is on holiday and is not scheduled to return until Sunday. A board meeting has been scheduled for next week to discuss the approach. Hays said in March that it was looking for acquisitions. However, it was thought the targets might be in Europe as the company has been trying to reduce its dependence on the UK which still accounts for three-quarters of group sales.

Mr Frost said that Hays and Christian Salvesen would make a perfect fit with strong businesses but only two common clients. The main attraction is Christian Salvesen's European distribution business which it has been building up.

Hays has been a strong performer on the stock market since it went public in 1989.

Floated at 100p, the shares have quadrupled in seven years.

The company has developed a three-legged structure based on distribution, commercial services such as document delivery and personnel. While many of its rivals, including Christian Salvesen, have found their distribution businesses squeezed by the supermarket groups, Hays has only two supermarket clients, Tesco and Waitrose.

Christian Salvesen grew out of a whaling and timber business and is still a family dominated company. But it has found the going tough recently and its shares have performed poorly. Chief executive Dr Chris Masters has been restructuring the group for six years during which he has sold a raft of businesses.

Its core businesses are distribution where its main clients are Sainsbury and M&S and Aggreko, the power generation and control division which ran into problems in 1994. From the peak that year of 400p the shares have since tumbled to around the 300p mark.

Rebels fail to oust 'part-time' utility boss

A third of shareholders at the annual meeting of Yorkshire Water yesterday voted against the election of Brandon Gough as part-time chairman.

The attempted rebellion, however, failed to overturn his appointment but came after a long debate about his ability to run the much criticised company on a part-time basis – mainly from his base in Kent.

The row at the company came as six other electricity and water utilities, including United Utilities – which is defending a new pay package for its top people – hold their annual meetings today.

Mr Gough, 58, who became £120,000-a-year chairman of Yorkshire Water in April, admitted he would only be able to devote two days a week to the job – and just one of these would be in Yorkshire. The rest of his time will be spent in his role as director of three public companies and chairman of two government bodies.

Reic Bowler, of pressure group Yorkshire Waterwatch, said: "How do you propose to lead a Yorkshire-based regional company from London? We don't have problems in London, we have them here."

Anne Simpson, of the corporate governance consultancy Pirc, added: "We're extremely concerned that the chairman is planning to spend only one day in Leeds. He said in his own speech that you need to stay close to your customers. If six



Ousted temporarily: Brandon Gough after yesterday's meeting was evacuated for a fire alarm. Photograph: Guzelian

days of the week the chairman isn't in the area, it's very difficult to achieve that."

But Mr Gough said because he was a non-executive chairman, with Dr Kevin Bond running the day-to-day business as

chairman and managing director of Yorkshire Water Services, he was devoting enough time to the job.

He added: "My home is where my home is, my home is where my wife is. The board ac-

cepted that, knowing very clearly what my personal circumstances are."

Earlier, shareholders had criticised the company's previous management for being "incompetent and inefficient" in

their handling of last summer's drought.

Mr Gough said the company had learnt from its experience and from criticisms made since by Ofwat and by an inquiry into the handling of the drought.

IN BRIEF

• Britannia Building Society has suspended almost 20 per cent of its sales force after an internal review found they were failing to follow recognised procedures. The society insisted customers were not affected by the actions of 39 of its 184 sales representatives and there was no evidence of mis-selling. Staff concerned were selling life insurance and investment products, such as PEPs and unit trusts, to existing customers from branches all over the country.

• The Securities and Futures Authority has fined Kidder Peabody £40,000 and £27,000 pounds in costs over failures in the supervision of the activities of its options traders. Also reprimanded and fined were Peter Bryant and Jorge Villon, who were co-heads of its European government bond options desk. The SFA said Mr Bryant, who was fined £5,000 and ordered to pay £3,300 costs, failed to update data that should have been changed in accordance with SFA rules and that the effect was to understate losses on the options books by around \$3.5m (£2.25m). Mr Villon failed to update interest rates on a daily basis and, in April 1994, failed to keep up to date with volatility rates for long dated options on the German book, the SFA said. He was fined £2,500, plus £3,000 costs.

• Ascot Holdings confirmed a £270m bid for mini-conglomerate Suter yesterday, whose board recommended the cash and shares offer. The terms of the offer are £797.63 plus 435 Ascot shares for every 1,000 Suter shares, worth 225p a share at Ascot's closing price of 33.4p, down 27p. There is also a cash alternative of 230p a share. Ascot said it planned to evaluate Suter's four businesses, which include refrigeration, chemicals, engineering and motor parts operations, with a view to concentrating on two and selling the remainder. To help fund the deal, Ascot, which was formerly known as Control Services, is planning to raise a further £30m from asset sales including the disposal of 170 pubs and a hotel.

• IBM announced second-quarter earnings of \$1.3bn (£866m), down from the \$1.7bn earned in the same quarter last year. The decline was less sharp than expected and the news offered fresh relief to technology stocks in New York, particularly on the battered Nasdaq, which rose strongly in morning trading. Louis Gerstner, the IBM chairman, said earnings had been affected by currency exchange losses and a drop in the price of memory chips. The gross total profit fell to 39.5 per cent in the quarter from 42.5 per cent. Revenues in North America increased 11 per cent from a year ago, but declined 2 per cent in the Europe-Middle East-Asia markets.

• Durable goods orders in the US fell by 0.8 per cent in June, boosting the bond market by sending fears of an imminent rise in interest rates into retreat. The fall, slightly bigger than expected, followed a strapping 4.2 per cent jump in orders in May. New claims for jobless benefits fell by 45,000 to 322,000 last week. The less volatile four-week average fell by 8,000 to 360,500. Federal Reserve governor Janet Yellen said yesterday the US economy would slow in the second half of the year, further reassuring financial markets.

• Dawson International is closing its Joseph Dawson woolcombing operation with the loss of 180 jobs in Bradford and establishing a new cashmere procurement and dehairing operation in China. It said it could not justify the further investment required to meet environmental regulations, given the long-term outlook for the UK woolcombing industry.

• Kookai, the privately-owned fashion retailer, is reversing into Fortminster, the quoted clothing manufacturer, in an £11m deal. Fortminster also announced a drop in losses from £2.3m to £519,000 in the year to 30 April.

Striking a balance: Continental trade offsets worsening deficit as BRC calls for benefits reforms

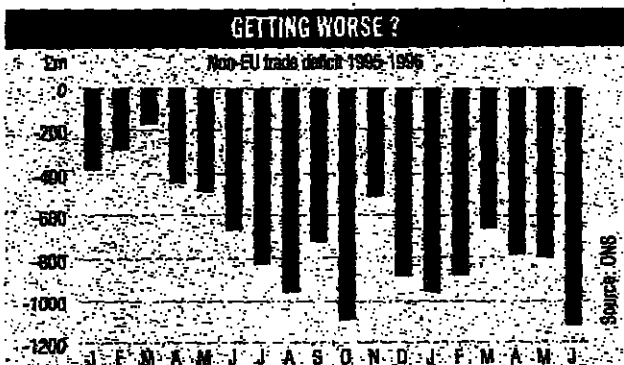
Growth in exports to Europe narrows deficit

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Britain was less in the red in its trade in goods with the rest of the world in May, but moved into a bigger deficit with non-EU countries in June. Government statisticians said yesterday the trend in the volatile monthly gap between exports and imports was broadening.

Behind the mixed headline figures lie a worsening trade balance with non-EU countries but an improvement in EU trade, published a month later. Fears that growing consumer demand will suck in imports have so far proved unfounded, while exports to other EU members have grown unexpectedly despite the economic slowdown on the Continent.

The global trade balance narrowed from £1.4bn to £985m in May. A drop in the EU deficit from £564m to £171m explained the improvement. Excluding oil and erratic items such as aircraft and precious stones, the underlying volume



of exports to the EU grew by 9.3 per cent in the year to May, compared to growth of just 0.3 per cent in import volumes.

However, the non-EU short-fall widened from £814m in May to £1.1bn in June. This was the biggest gap since February 1993.

Half of a 6.5 per cent drop in non-EU exports in June was due to a decline in shipments of oil and erratic items. The underlying growth of export volumes slowed to 8.3 per cent in the year to June from 9.6 per cent the previous month. Import volumes ex-

Retailers call for tax cuts to tackle benefits trap

Britain's retailers are calling on the Government to cut taxes for the low paid and make the move from claiming benefits into work more attractive, writes Diane Coyle.

In an echo of Labour's "welfare to work" policy, the British Retail Consortium argues that the disincentives to work, due to the loss of benefits for people who start earning, are too great. Starting wages in retailing are low enough to be competing with social security.

The BRC's pre-Budget submission to Chancellor Kenneth Clarke, the first of the season, says there should be modest tax cuts "targeted towards the lower end of the income spectrum". It argues for higher allowances or a wider low rate band.

Andrew Higginson, chairman of the BRC's economic affairs committee, said: "Potential employees are saying to us that it is difficult for them to give up their welfare benefits. As employers we want to see that addressed."

The submission says: "The interaction between the tax and benefit systems can result in individuals being unwilling to take work for fear of being made worse off as a result."

It also calls for reform of the employers' national insurance rates to remove the big step change in their liability – from £3.15 to £5.50 – at £110 a week. This discourages them from hiring staff for more than a limited number of hours a week, according to the retailers, most of whom have many part-time employees.

Potential recruits can be better off turning down pay of up to £4.50 an hour and staying unemployed because they lose benefits at such a sharp rate when they move into work. That level is well above the £3.50 that the Labour Party is expected to set as a minimum wage, and close to the typical pay level in most of the big retail groups.

A married person with two children would only be £17.40 better off as a result of taking a job paying £140 a week. The

reason for the high effective tax rate on the extra earnings is mainly due to the loss of housing and council tax benefits, along with additional costs such as travel and child care.

The possibility of working in the "informal" or "black" economy on top of claiming benefit adds to the unattractiveness of taking a low-paid job. Some estimates put potential average earnings from benefits plus the informal economy at over £200 a week. Benefit fraud is thought to exceed £2.5bn a year. The BRC has added pleas to reduce the administrative burden on small businesses and the extension of capital allowances to commercial buildings to its Budget shopping list. It wants the Uniform Business Rate to go up by less than inflation, on top of keeping the transitional relief scheme in force.

The retailers' trade association has also joined the drinks lobby in pleading for further reductions in alcohol duties, to bring the UK closer in line with Continental countries.

Labour proposes league tables of training data

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

A future Labour Government would publish league tables of Britain's biggest companies to reveal their commitment to training their workforce.

The initiative, to be announced today by Stephen Byers, Labour's employment spokesman, takes the present Government's policy of league tables for schools and diverts it into the world of business.

Labour has already revealed

its intention to introduce legislation stipulating that annual reports contain details about training. The league tables – which would cover the top 100 companies employing a total of 3.5 million people – will ensure the information attracts maximum publicity, Labour believes it might put "friendly public pressure" on businesses to spend more on improving employees' skills.

The tables would cover issues such as the amount spent per employee; the percentage of the

workforce taking part in programmes; and the amount invested in individual training accounts and the number of employees taking advantage of them. There will also be a comparison between companies of the number and percentage of employees gaining a recognised qualification.

Speaking at the International Union of Socialist Teachers today in Birmingham, Mr Byers is set to say the policy will provide a "powerful incentive". He will add that the estab-

lishment of a "training culture" is vital for the future of the economy and that companies' records on training should be exposed to public scrutiny.

Mr Byers believes the league tables would place no extra burden on individual businesses. It would, however, concentrate the minds of senior company executives.

The establishment of such tables will send a clear message to businesses of the importance of training. A new Labour government attaches to training.

He argues that Labour has already demonstrated its keenness not to overburden business by abandoning the idea of a training levy on companies.

The Confederation of British Industry yesterday would not comment on the issue, preferring to await more detail on the initiative.

The national council of the Training and Enterprise Council, which represents the 81 employer-led TECs in England and Wales, supported Labour's contention that companies

should be encouraged to invest in their employees.

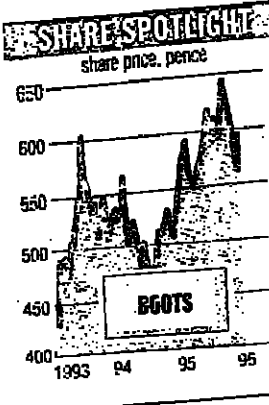
However, Nigel Chilcott, secretary to the council, said TECs would want to be sure the Labour Party's "interesting proposal" would improve companies' competitiveness and that industry would not face extra costs.

"We would also hope such league tables would take into account the complexity of the data and the difficulties involved in comparing companies," he said.

market report/shares

Upbeat Footsie relegates ICI from bellwether status

DATA BANK
FT-SE 100
3684.7 +15.9
FT-SE 250
4205.3 +23.3
FT-SE 350
1846.5 +8.5
SEAG VOLUME
586.1m shares,
24,890 bargains
Gilt Index
n/a



Calm returned to the London market yesterday as institutional investors chose to sit on their hands after the recent ructions on both sides of the Atlantic.

Dealers ignored the poor second-quarter results from ICI, a former bellwether stock, to focus on Nationwide Building Society's quarter-point rate cut, bullish noises from high street retailer Boots and a firm start on Wall Street. The Footsie closed just off its intraday high at 3684.7, a gain of 15.9.

ICI fell 17p to 761p as brokers downgraded their estimates. Boots, on the other hand, put on 15p to 599p after reporting a 5 per cent like-for-like sales increase at Boots the Chemist in the first quarter, while its DIY arm Do It All showed an underlying increase of 3.4 per cent.

The positive news from Boots also lifted shares in cosmetics retailer Body Shop

which closed 11p higher at 193p, a level last seen at the end of 1994. Earlier this year Anita and Gordon Roddick abandoned plans to take the company they founded private. The shares have subsequently rebounded - just as they did when Alan Sugar tried a similar buy-back trick to focus on Nationwide Building Society's quarter-point rate cut, bullish noises from high street retailer Boots and a firm start on Wall Street. The Footsie closed just off its intraday high at 3684.7, a gain of 15.9.

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MARKET REPORT PATRICK TOOHER

offer will be recommended. Shares in Salvesen soared 60p to 349, while Hays slipped 26p to 414p.

Confirmation of an offer for mini-conglomerate Suter pushed the shares 18p ahead at 215p in trade of 7.9m. Ascor Holdings, the bidder, relinquished 27p at 334p.

Takeover whispers also returned to the electricity sector. East Midlands touched 585p in hectic trade sparked by a rumour it will find itself on the receiving end of a hostile takeover. The shares ended the session at 571p, up 32p. The speculation ignited interest in the rest of the sector, with London

Electricity 10p better at 605p. Yorkshire 9p ahead at 633p. Southern 7p to the good at 657p while Northern rose 9p to 534p.

Lloyds TSB was the day's best blue-chip performer, adding 12p to 340.5p ahead of today's results. Strong results from its mortgage lending unit Cheltenham and Gloucester also helped.

Among the other significant gainers were Rolls-Royce at 224p, up 8p, and British Aerospace at 943p, 18p higher on the back of the Government's defence procurement decisions covering around £4bn in orders.

Shares in British Gas continued their good run this

week, hardening 2p to 193.5p following the company's move to recover around £1bn, paid as gas levies, from the Department of Trade and Industry. Analysts thought the move was unlikely to benefit shareholders, however, suggesting that, if the claim was successful, the funds would probably be paid over a long period and would have to be distributed to the company's customers.

Dixons fell 10p to 483p on fears that the DTI will impose statutory pricing on the sale of extended guarantees.

Reuters remained friendly, falling another 17p to 686p on further consideration of its low revenue growth in results yesterday and concerns that the expected share buy-back may not be imminent.

Two buy notes breathed new life in biotech babe Chiroscience, 11p higher at 324p. Lehman Brothers' valuation model suggests the shares are

worth 385p with a price target of 620p by the end of next year. The major contributor to this assessment is local anaesthetic drug levobupivacaine, which makes up a third of Chiroscience's estimated worth, though no other product contributes more than 10 per cent. Williams de Broe is even more bullish, estimating a net present value of 528p.

News of "buoyant trading in recent months" from restaurant groups gave Pizza Express a fillip, sending the shares 28p higher to 398p. Pelican rose 5p to 144p in sympathy.

Software group Admiral was also in demand, rising 30p to 295p, after reporting an "excellent start" to the year.

However, shares in Wolstenholme Rink came down to earth. Over 1000p at the beginning of the month, they crashed 145p to 808p after the chemicals group issued a profit warning.

STERLING Publishing continued its tentative recovery, adding 2p to 27p. Managing director Michael Summers picked up 75,000 shares at Wednesday's closing price, his second purchase in three days. The USM-listed publisher of international reference books and magazines has been struggling to restore confidence since a warning last year of problems with advertisers in the former Soviet bloc sent the shares tumbling from 100p to 20p. Last week Sterling posted reduced losses of £2.6m after pulling out of Eastern Europe. House broker Credit Lyonnais looks for pre-tax profits of £2.5m in the year to March.

TRPS moved 5p higher to 136p. The environmental consultancy which works with BAA on the Terminal Five extension at Heathrow airport posted record interim results.

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Alcoholic Beverages						
Amstel	10.00	0.00	100	Amstel	10.00	0.00
Beck's	12.00	0.00	100	Beck's	12.00	0.00
Budweiser	11.00	0.00	100	Budweiser	11.00	0.00
Carlsberg	13.00	0.00	100	Carlsberg	13.00	0.00
Corona	9.00	0.00	100	Corona	9.00	0.00
Heineken	14.00	0.00	100	Heineken	14.00	0.00
Hoegaarden	15.00	0.00	100	Hoegaarden	15.00	0.00
King	16.00	0.00	100	King	16.00	0.00
Leffe	17.00	0.00	100	Leffe	17.00	0.00
Stout	18.00	0.00	100	Stout	18.00	0.00
Van Melle	19.00	0.00	100	Van Melle	19.00	0.00
Witte	20.00	0.00	100	Witte	20.00	0.00
Banks, Merchant						
Bank of America	100.00	0.00	100	Bank of America	100.00	0.00
Bank of Canada	90.00	0.00	100	Bank of Canada	90.00	0.00
Bank of England	80.00	0.00	100	Bank of England	80.00	0.00
Bank of France	70.00	0.00	100	Bank of France	70.00	0.00
Bank of Germany	60.00	0.00	100	Bank of Germany	60.00	0.00
Bank of Italy	50.00	0.00	100	Bank of Italy	50.00	0.00
Bank of Japan	40.00	0.00	100	Bank of Japan	40.00	0.00
Bank of Korea	30.00	0.00	100	Bank of Korea	30.00	0.00
Bank of Russia	20.00	0.00	100	Bank of Russia	20.00	0.00
Bank of Spain	10.00	0.00	100	Bank of Spain	10.00	0.00
Bank of Sweden	0.00	0.00	100	Bank of Sweden	0.00	0.00
Bank of Switzerland	0.00	0.00	100	Bank of Switzerland	0.00	0.00
Bank of Taiwan	0.00	0.00	100	Bank of Taiwan	0.00	0.00
Bank of Thailand	0.00	0.00	100	Bank of Thailand	0.00	0.00
Bank of Turkey	0.00	0.00	100	Bank of Turkey	0.00	0.00
Bank of USA	0.00	0.00	100	Bank of USA	0.00	0.00
Bank of Vietnam	0.00	0.00	100	Bank of Vietnam	0.00	0.00
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Steer clear of flabby, unwieldy ICI

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

If you are running a tracker fund, you have no choice about being invested in ICI. With a market value, even after spinning off Zeneca, of more than £5bn it is impossible to ignore. For any other investor, however, it is hard to think of a good reason to look twice at the company.

As a destroyer of real shareholder value, ICI has been almost without parallel among Britain's larger companies. Since the beginning of 1994 its shares have moved sideways, underperforming the wider market by 11 per cent. Over five years it has lagged by 30 per cent; over 10 the deficit widens to 33 per cent. Yesterday, the shares closed 13p lower at 765p, down from a peak of 954p in April.

Why this should be the case was made abundantly clear yesterday when an accelerated cost-cutting drive was offered as a palliative for a stock market coming to terms with a 28 per cent collapse in pre-exceptional profits for the six months to June. The picture painted of ICI (as a means of suggesting the scope for improvement) was of an unwieldy, flabby behemoth that has become so large as to be almost unmanageable.

Within individual businesses, the City was told, "there appears to be a hidden manufacturing plant", so inefficient are the workings of ICI's factories. By simply bringing these sites up to world standards, over £500m of stock might be released. That ICI is not already up with the best in the world is a worrying indictment of such a central part of Britain's industrial landscape.

Another example. For the first time in more than 20 years, ICI has assembled a map of all its suppliers. The company spends £7bn a year on everything from raw materials to paper clips, but doesn't know centrally where it all comes from. It is hardly surprising that the process can be improved. What is staggering, or not when you think about the scale of ICI, is that it hasn't been done before.

ICI is planning to rip out £400m of costs by the middle of next year. It seems to have been achieving these sort of gains ever since Hanson's non-bid at the beginning of the 1990s gave the group the fright of its life. That may be a sign of good, if belated, management, but it is certainly evidence of a chronically unfit company.

ICI said yesterday it hoped the collapse in industrial chemical prices was a pause in growth rather than the start of a slump. It has, however, prompted the company to rethink its place in the chemicals industry and to start considering shifting the whole emphasis downstream, towards the lighter, higher-margin, less cyclical end of materials and paints. It will be a painful, costly and risky process.

Analysts were yesterday reining in forecasts for the year to between £650m and £750m, the size of the range

indicating the volatility and, therefore, low quality of ICI's earnings. A prospective yield of over 5 per cent gives the shares some support, but they remain as unappealing as ever.

Boots reinforces sales rise hopes

It is little wonder Boots' shares jumped 15p to 599p yesterday. Coming after Wednesday's bullish retail sales figures, Boots' update on current trading at its annual meeting confirmed hopes that a retail recovery could be under way. The shares have had a rocky time since Boots agreed to take control of WH Smith's half of the Do It All DIY business in June. And there have also been doubts about the impact on the chemist chain if re-sale price maintenance were to be removed from over-the-counter medicines.

But yesterday's figures showed good performance across the board, even from the long tail of problematic businesses that have so often proved a disappointment. Group sales in the three months to June were 7.2 per cent ahead of the same period last year, with like for like sales at Boots the Chemists 3 per cent higher.

There were strong rises in the ill-starred DIY businesses. Do It All, which has been the real dog of the portfolio for years, increased comparative sales by 8.4 per cent, though the company stressed it was too early to say if this progress could be sustained.

AG Stanley, the Homestyle and Fads operation, also notched up an 8 per cent sales rise, although again it is early days, and the group still has a heavy presence in weaker high street sites. Even Halfords, which has often looked like it has been running on empty, has finally put some gas in the tank and pushed sales 3 per cent higher.

Elsewhere in the business, Boots Contracting and Boots Healthcare International also improved sales, with the healthcare business doing particularly well.

All this was backed by upbeat comments from chairman Sir Michael Angus, who said there were "clear signs of a recovery in consumer confidence" in the current year. He added that market conditions looked more encouraging than for some time.

Boots' ongoing investment of £300m in its chemist chain will see a market-leading push for health and beauty products and new stores added in seven different formats. Also to come is the second trial of the Advantage loyalty card in Boots the Chemist, though

there are still no plans for a national roll-out.

Kleinwort Benson edged its profit forecasts up for the company to £525m for the current year, which puts the shares on a forward rating of 16.

They are still a way off the 646p reached in April, and the DIY improvement could prove to be short lived. This makes the forecast about right.

Unsung Boosey gets noticed

The rise and rise of Boosey & Hawkes has been one of the stock market's unsung success stories over the past few years. Worth just 131p five years ago, the shares peaked at 755p in May. It is perhaps not surprising, on one of the best ratings and lowest yields around, that they should have run out of puff to close last night 3p lower at 725p.

There are plenty of reasons for Boosey to have attracted so much support along the way. It is unique in the British market, one of the three largest musical instrument makers in the world and the owner of one of the best catalogues of classical music copyrights, including such 20th-century giants such as Bartok, Elton, Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Strauss.

As a long-term growth story, both of Boosey's operating businesses have enormous potential. The company has a tiny share of the enormous American market and is well placed to ride what should be very rapid growth in demand in Asia as the fast increasing middle classes in the Pacific Rim countries give their children the musical start they would have liked themselves. In publishing, formats such as digital cassette tapes should ensure volumes growing at well above the rate of inflation for years to come.

Not surprisingly, against that favourable backdrop, Boosey finds itself in enviable financial shape. Profits have been rising steadily since current chief executive Richard Holland took over in 1989. Cashflow swamps both earnings and capital expenditure, always a healthy sign, and the dividend is well covered.

So what's the catch? Quite simply, the market has finally woken up to the good news. Even after the recent weakness, the shares trade on a prospective p/e ratio of 32 this year, falling to only 29 to the end of 1997. The expected dividend income yield this year is a meagre 1.2 per cent.

With almost half the shares controlled by US publisher Carl Fischer, it does not require much demand to push up the price, and the shares have doubled in less than a year. That can work in reverse and, despite the good long-term outlook, the shares look vulnerable.

Franglais invades sacred precincts of the Bank

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK



'Allo, 'allo: 'Les banques too big to fail' raised eyebrows

Zut alors! There is one thing that the French hate even more than hearing English people trying to speak French, and that is French people speaking the hated Franglais.

Le weekend and le hamburger are just two examples of the pernicious impact English has had on the French population, and barely a month goes by without yet another official attempt to stem the tide.

With this in mind, Howard Davies, deputy governor of the Bank of England, was astonished to hear a senior French banker refer during a discussion on supervision to "les banques 'too-big-to-fail'". The senior female executive of the Banque de France who used this phrase was at the Bank of England to discuss new ways to encourage international co-operation following crashes like the Baring debacle.

She was referring to the French equivalent of the high street banks which are simply too big and important to be allowed to fail. Mr Davies was shocked to hear a member of France's inner establishment using such Franglais.

Even more shocking to outsiders, perhaps, is that the entire discussion in Threadneedle Street was being conducted in French in the first place. Whatever would Norman Tebbit say?

John Moores, eldest son of the late founder of the Liverpool pools dynasty, is retiring from the Littlewoods Organisation at the grand old age of 67, having been with the family firm for 50 years.

He will now be able to devote more time to breeding

Fans of John Le Carré will have a field day today when a former MI6 agent appears at an industrial tribunal in

Croydon claiming unfair dismissal. A solicitor from the human rights group Liberty, John Wadham, is representing the un-named former spook, who has also put in a claim to the European Court of Human Rights.

At the moment the court just has to decide whether the ex-agent can appear in court at all. Foreign secretary Malcolm Rifkind has just issued a certificate banning the former agent from going to the tribunal. Just don't go near anyone carrying pointy umbrellas.

Aberdeen Angus cattle on Merseyside, one of his favourite hobbies. Mr Moores is also Chancellor of the John Moores University in Liverpool.

Mr Moores was one of the "big three" on the family-dominated management board of Littlewoods, the other two being his sister, Lady Grantchester, and James Suenson-Thayor. Fans of dynasties should not worry, however.

There are plenty more Moores in the company ready to take over if need be. Littlewoods was keen to stress that there was no hint of family wrangling with the new chairman of Littlewoods, James Ross, who came in from Cable & Wireless. Mr Moores "just decided

ed this was the time to go", said the company.

Mr Jeffries, chairman of the National Grid and a leading privatisation fat cat, is about to spend two days with thirty lucky private shareholders, showing them the inner workings of the company.

Mr Jeffries, who made well over a million from the privatisation from his salary and share options, is launching a National Grid Network Programme in December.

Thirty investors will be chosen by ballot to visit key company sites, including the control centre at Wokingham, Berkshire, which critics say bears a striking resemblance to "an over-sized Happy Eater".

They will also visit the telecommunications subsidiary Energis and experience the joys of pylon maintenance. At the end of the tour, the 30 will be asked to feed back their experiences and views to the National Grid Board. I can't wait to see the section on executive pay.

Rise in pay-offs leaves BT profits flat

CHRIS GODSMARK
Business Correspondent

BT unveiled flat first-quarter profits yesterday, but gave little away about its continuing dispute with the industry regulator, Ofcom, over the proposed measure to ban anti-competitive behaviour.

Pre-tax profits fell by 0.6 per cent to £869m in the three months to the end of June, although the decline was due to an increase in redundancy payments in the quarter, from £22m to £35m.

BT also pointed out that the 4 per cent rise in its turnover, to £3.64bn, came after price cuts during the year which totalled £132m. Robert Brace, finance director, said that, excluding these, the underlying increase in turnover was around 8 per cent. The price cuts knocked 3.7 per cent off sales of international calls. Sales of new services were more promising, however, with mobile turnover increasing in the quarter by 24 per cent.

Sir Iain Vallance, chairman, said: "BT has demonstrated its continuing resilience as well as the ability to succeed in an increasingly competitive environment."

But competition continued to hit BT's domestic business, reducing the number of residential customers by 30,000. Mr Brace said about 50,000 homes a month are switching to the cable operators, though at the same time BT is signing up around 40,000 new domestic customers, resulting in a net monthly loss of 10,000.

He said: "We are facing really tough competition, but I think on service and price we are proving that we are very competitive."

The results also disclosed that just under 1,000 staff took voluntary redundancy over the period, with payouts averaging £52,000. Employees continue to leave BT at a rate of 8,000 a year, unchanged from 1995.

Asked about the dispute with Ofcom, Mr Brace said the BT board had met on Tuesday to discuss the situation and had "reached some decisions".

Scottish TV pays £120m for publisher

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

The embryo of the first all-Scottish multi-media group was created yesterday when Scottish Television announced the takeover of Caledonian Publishing.

Taking advantage of changes to cross-media ownership rules that for the first time allow television companies to control regional newspaper groups, Scottish, the ITV franchise holder for Central Scotland, is paying £120m for Caledonian, publishers of the *Herald* and the *Evening Times* in Glasgow.

Announcing the final offer yesterday, Gus Macdonald, chairman of STV, said the merger would "bring together strong brands and allow the company to better target the key demographics of interest to advertisers."

The offer, in cash or alternative loan note, values the company at about 15 times current year forecast earnings, compared with about 19 times for other quoted regional newspaper groups.

The agreed deal has already received the approval of shareholders representing 83 per cent of the shares, STV said yesterday.

Caledonian's chief executive, Liam Kane, will leave the company once the formal hand-over is completed. Caledonian will be run by Andrew Flanagan, STV's managing director.

Mr Kane had been part of the management group that bought the titles from Lomax in 1992, and had been eager to take the company public through a flotation. Those plans were abandoned in favour of negotiations done in favour of negotiations with STV when it became clear that the target of at least £100m was unlikely to be reached.

Mr Kane, who had been given an opportunity to stay, is believed to have preferred to look for a senior position elsewhere, rather than work with

in the STV group management. STV said it could achieve annualised savings of about £3m, and that the acquisition would be earnings-enhancing.

Both the Independent Television Commission and the Office of Fair Trading are expected to review the deal.

Mr Macdonald said that the merger made sense on the basis

would be no job losses. The merger has won the support of the main political parties in Scotland, but must still receive regulatory approval.

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Eye on the target: Gus Macdonald says the merger brings together stronger brands

City questions benefits of media cross-overs

MAI and United led the way, to be followed now by an all-Scottish affair. Mathew Horsman delves deeper

Now that two newspaper-television mergers have been agreed - the £3bn link between MAI and United earlier this year and yesterday's agreed takeover of Caledonian by Scottish TV - the City is beginning to take a closer look at the whole idea of cross-media ownership. And many analysts do not like what they see.

Are there really any synergies between commercial television and old-fashioned print media? Gus Macdonald, chairman of STV, certainly thinks so, citing the prospect of cross-promotion, tiered advertising sales, common back office, even some shared use of news-gathering and archives.

But in the words of one leading analyst: "The connection between broadcasting and newspapers is very tenuous and untested."

Certainly the tie-up between

United and MAI has shown few signs to date of having created any new value for shareholders. Launched, by most accounts, as a defensive move against the unwanted attentions of Michael Green's Carlton Communications, the new company, United News & Media, has so far only tentatively explored ways of bringing the television and print businesses together.

largely through a cross-promotion plan to market the new Channel 5, which is 30 per cent owned by United, in the pages of the group's *Express* titles and the *Daily Star*.

"Everybody thinks that Rupert Murdoch developed Sky Television thanks to the *Sun* and the *Times*," Louise Barton, an-

alyst at Henderson Crosthwaite, said. "In fact, the cross-promotion was pretty marginal. Sky added subscribers because of its programming, not because of the *Sun*."

In the case of the Scottish deal, the view is mixed. Many in the newspaper industry concede that the geographic overlap of the two businesses give the merger some justification. Mr Macdonald's contention that a "wider revenue base from local and national advertising would be created" strikes many as realistic. Right now, about 90 per cent of STV's advertising is national, directed out of London. In the case of Caledonian, about 90 per cent of its advertising is local.

"We would like to rebalance that ratio if we can," Gary Hughes, STV's finance director said.

But there are grave doubts that other efficiencies will flow from the merger. Certainly the idea that common news gathering could be used for both television and print is rejected by most industry sources. "Yes, you might be able to use a common data base for library and archive material. But the two businesses of broadcasting and print publishing have very little else in common."

Mr Macdonald points out that STV has a library of regional programming that could be used for photo stills in the Caledonian titles. But he con-

cedes that there are limits to how much the two companies could be integrated. Leading print journalists at the *Herald* would not be allowed to figure prominently on STV's television schedule, for instance, because of strict rules enforced by the Independent Television Commission on "undue prominence."

The same rules have caused problems at Associated Newspapers, which publishes the *Daily Mail* and operates the cable-exclusive news and entertainment service, Channel One.

There may in the future be more room for cross-fertilisation between the group's magazines and its television schedule, however, if the ITC agrees to water down strict rules against "masthead" programming, whereby a TV show could be branded with the same name as a specialist magazine.

Filofax angers shareholders with pay rises

NIGEL COPE

Filofax directors faced the wrath of their shareholders yesterday when the company proposed a sharp increase in non-executive director fees and two new share-option schemes just two days after it issued a dramatic profits warning.

The company's shares collapsed by 40 per cent on the warning which claimed de-stocking by WH Smith and slower growth in the US and Japan would hit this year's profits.

One shareholder said the proposals represented "rewards for failure". Another questioned whether it was appropriate to recommend increasing non-executive director's pay from £20,000 to £50,000 a year given the company's recent announcement.

Though some shareholders voted against the schemes both were waived through.

The criticisms came at Filofax's annual meeting, which was attended by only a handful of shareholders in the basement of a Filofax shop in central London.

Ron Corbett, who sold his business to Filofax in return for shares instead of cash two years ago, said he was "shattered" by the profits warning. Another pondered whether the collapse in the company's share price might make the company vulnerable to a takeover.

Tom Drake, who is a non-executive of Filofax Limited,

criticised one board member for selling almost £2m of shares at 258p.

However, chief executive Robin Field said the director in question, the management consultant Richard Koch, had sold the shares in November, well ahead of the warning.

Some shareholders expressed dismay at the timing of the warning which came just five weeks after an up-beat results statement.

"We all came here to congratulate you on last year's results," one said. "One has to ask the question - are their any other factors behind the warning that have not yet been announced?"

Mr Field was also asked what words of comfort he could offer about the company's future. He replied that the market for ring binders was still rising and that Filofax remained the best-known brand. "In the short term we have some issues to address but in the long term we've got a sound business."

Mr Field was also asked if the company might conduct a share buy-back to increase shareholder value. Mr Field said the issue was under consideration but no decision had been taken.

He added that acquisitions were still possible though these would be smaller deals that could be done for cash rather than shares.

Last month the company said it was hoping to pick up some branded stationery businesses.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Admiral (I)	43.0m (20.2m)	5.10m (5.53m)	5.5p (6.42p)	0.7p (0.58p)
Card Clear (I)	0.50m (0.78m)	0.20m (0.28m)	0.5p (1.32p)	Nil
CLM Insurance (I)	- (I)	3.2m (6.74m)	1.5p (1.42p)	1.5p (1.42p)
Craighead's Hospitality (F)	10.1m (8.53m)	0.47m (1.0m)	5.3p (13.95p)	3.2p (7.7p)
Donch Holdings (F)	47.1m (39.0m)	9.6m (7.3m)	91.2p (76.2p)	18p (12.1p)
Formaldehyde (F)	22.0m (25.4m)	0.5m (2.3m)	2.77p (12.23p)	1.17p (3.37p)
ICI (I)	2.73m (2.61m)	37.0m (289m)	1.1p (3.42p)	12.5p (11.32p)
ICI (I)	0.34m (0.51m)	0.01m (0.17m)	4.75p (12.72p)	Nil
Rafael Metal (F)	9.32m (6.18m)	1.5m (0.82m)	5.9p (4.7p)	0.95p (1.42p)
RPS (I)	- (I)	0.57m (0.34m)	212.5p (212.5p)	12.5p (12.5p)
Stewart & Wright (F)	- (I)	-	-	-

(F) - Fiat (I) - Imperial

Hill under threat from Frentzen

Motor racing
DERICK ALLSOP
reports from Hockenheim

Damon Hill put on a brave, smiling face, but the body language betrayed his discomfort. Suddenly the controlled, orderly drive to the world championship and the road beyond paved with gold appeared in danger of sabotage.

As if he did not have enough on his mind, arriving here for Sunday's German Grand Prix with a title lead reduced to 15 points, he walked into a barricade of speculation that he is to lose his job at Williams-Renault next season to Heinz-Harald Frentzen. Hill confronted questions on his position at Williams with prepared resistance. "I'm not going to be drawn into discussing the conjecture about my future in grand prix motor racing. I don't feel I need to discuss it and I've nothing to say."

He did, however, say: "I've made it clear I'd love to stay at Williams. I've not really driven for any other team. I feel part of the team, and part of the success here has been brought about by my hard work and my being a good team member."

Frentzen, once rated by some ahead of Michael Schumacher as Germany's finest prospect, has long been linked with Williams and it is reported that the team's boss, Frank Williams, has negotiated a deal with him. That prompted a statement from Williams which scarcely discouraged rumours: "Jacques Villeneuve, having commenced a two-year contract with the team at the beginning of the 1996 season, is the only confirmed driver for 1997. Negotiations regarding the team's other driver for 1997 will commence in good time."

Williams have a knack of losing world champions and Hill would follow an illustrious line of drivers who, for various reasons, have left the team as the No 1 during the past decade: Nelson Piquet in 1987, Nigel Mansell in 1992, and Alain Prost in 1993. The circumstances this time are different again and there seems no obvious reason to replace Hill with Frentzen or, indeed, any other driver apart from Schumacher, and he, it would seem, is not available.

Frentzen has had scant opportunity to demonstrate his ability with Sauber-Ford and is no nearer attaining his maiden

grand prix win. Hill, with 19 wins – six this season – has a proven track record and, on the face of it, has done nothing to rock the Williams boat. It is possible stories of Hill's demands for a huge pay rise have not been well received at Williams, who in turn know they have the drivers covered and may see in Frentzen a bridge to BMW, one of the manufacturers mooted as partners to the team after Renault quit Formula One at the end of next season.

What is clear is that Frentzen, out of contract at the end of this year, would jump at the opportunity. He has had an offer from Jordan-Peugeot and promised a decision today, but earlier this week asked for more time. Frentzen, 29, said: "I have nothing to hide. I would like to go to Williams. If my manager is not talking to them he is not doing his job. I spoke to Frank Williams in 1994 and people have been telling me since that I am going to drive for Williams, but all I can say is I hope to be in Formula One next season."

If that is with Williams then Hill, probably armed with the commercially valuable No 1, would be welcome at the ambitious Jordan team.

FIRST TEST: Durham pace bowler makes a mark on his England debut



Photograph: Peter Jay

England's players check the replay following the run-out of Salim Malik at Lord's yesterday

Brown brings presence to bear

DAVID LLEWELYN

There was an appropriate symmetry to the day on which Simon Brown proved to be a fly in the Pakistan ointment. Brown's Test career was just 13 minutes old when he took his first wicket for England, that of Aamir Sohail, who offered no shot when rapped on the pads by the left-arm pace bowler's 10th delivery.

It was a wonder the Pakistan opener survived the appeal by Brown. It was bellowed around the concrete bowl that Lord's

has become and the echoes were still reverberating when the umpire Steve Bucknor's raised finger created a little bit of Durham history.

Brown, just 27, is the first player produced by Durham to have been selected for full international honours. So it was an even more special moment, particularly for the North-east. A moment to savour. And that is precisely what Brown had to do for the next five hours and 55 minutes. He had his share of close-run things but little else until the last delivery of the day.

Then Brown had another

covering of glory when Waqar Younis presented him with a straightforward catch at mid-off, when he played an injudicious shot to an Alan Mullally delivery. "It was a fantastic feeling walking out there," Brown said, "in front of so many people and it was great to get a wicket so early. It gave me confidence. I relaxed a bit."

The day seemed to mirror Brown's whole cricket career. He was snapped up by Northamptonshire as a promising 15-year-old but by 1990, when he no longer appeared to figure in their plans, he con-

templated giving up the game. Durham, his home county, showed an interest. Brown reciprocated, played Minor Counties for them and meanwhile studied for his City and Guilds electrical engineering.

First-class status was then bestowed upon Durham and Brown started taking wickets in earnest. He has accumulated 292 wickets, almost three times as many as John Wood, who was also there from the start. Already this season he has 56 wickets to his name, which have helped Durham pick up maximum bowling bonus points in 9

of their 11 Championship matches to date.

He certainly pleased the England coach, David Lloyd, who said: "I thought Brown was solid. He's got a good action and when the ball does wing for him he will be devastating. We picked a side for swing but it wasn't until later on that we did that. It may be an inexperienced attack, Mark Ealham is a bit of a plus in that he can be a heck of a plus in that he will strive that much harder to show what they can do. And I thought they did that today."

Broncos close to Offiah deal

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

The London Broncos hope to announce today that Martin Offiah, the captain's most celebrated rugby league player, has signed for them and will play against St Helens tomorrow.

London are close to agreeing a fee with Wigan, who made the initial approach about a possible deal, and are prepared for Offiah, who left Rosslyn Park as an unsung 21-year-old, to play rugby union in the winter. "That is not a problem," said the Broncos' chairman, Barry Maranta. "Nor do I think that the fee is going to get in the way of the deal and we are planning to have him in the side against Saracens."

Offiah became league's most expensive player when Wigan signed him from Widnes for £440,000 in 1992. "He is an icon in professional rugby," Maranta said. "He would be the personality that could provide a focus for what we are trying to do here and give us the profile we need. It has been well-known for a while that we have been looking for a London player and that must be why Wigan thought the time was right to contact us."

The willingness to lose Offiah is another sign of how tight times have become at the game's dominant club. They

have already shed Scott Quinnell and, this week, Shem Taitupu in moves back to rugby union and transferring Offiah would make a huge slice out of Wigan's crippling wage bill.

"Obviously it is a big blow, because he is a great, great player," said the Wigan coach, Graeme West. "But we have had the best part of him and he is coming to the twilight of his career." Offiah, now aged 29, has scored over 400 tries in his career, including the joint Wigan record of 10 in a match.

The man who shares that record, Shaun Edwards, has given a strong hint of further problems within the camp by declaring himself unfit for the second successive match, when Wigan play Halifax tonight.

Edwards has a nagging knee injury, but is also understood to be unhappy with his role in West's current plans. Craig Murdoch continues at scrum-half in a match Wigan must win to maintain the pressure on St Helens at the top of the table.

Kelighley Cougars' loose forward, Martin Wood, has asked for a transfer within hours of the announcement that the Great Britain and England coach, Phil Larder's contract is not being renewed at the end of the season.

Oldham Bears have signed 22-year-old London Broncos hooker Paul Stevens on loan.

Gloucester furious with RFU

Rugby Union

Gloucester have accused the Rugby Football Union of "steamroller" tactics after being forced to scrap a prestige game with Western Samoa.

Club officials have had to cancel the attractive match with the touring side – scheduled for 22 November – following an RFU decision to squeeze a further three divisional games into a packed fixture list.

"The RFU have steamrollered this divisional stuff through," an angry Gloucester RFC board member, John Hall, said. "We could end up with six or eight divisional games altogether and lose our players for five or six weeks of what is already a packed season."

The board chairman, David Foyle, said the Western Samoa game was only agreed last week and the three additional divisional games – on 20, 24 and 28 November – were totally unexpected. "They have come out of the blue," he said. "In the circumstances we thought it was best for the players, supporters and tourists if we pulled out of the match."

Australia's centre and vice-captain, Tim Horan, has a suspected broken knee and will miss tomorrow's tri-series Test against New Zealand in Brisbane.

Byas the pick of the bunch

DEREK HODGSON

reports from Scarborough
Somerset 309 & 69-3
Yorkshire 292

The leaders had a day of mixed emotions. They lost wickets regularly, finished their first innings 17 behind Somerset, but will have been delighted to find North Marine Road's turf more responsive. A similar surface to Nottinghamshire's arrival will also cheer Yorkshire, for they were fearing that two visits here would bring two more stultifying draws.

Batting again, Somerset soon lost Peter Bowler to a fast new yorker and, under heavy pressure, they will need patience

and application down the order today.

The warm sun and cool wind quickened the pitch, but it remained soft enough to help the seam, while Jeremy Batty demonstrated there was turn from the rough. So, all the bowlers had hope, the batsmen enjoyed the pace, the outfield was fast and a near 5,000 crowd had that rarity: a match in near perfect balance.

Somerset had a day of snakes and ladders. Michael Vaughan set off like a train, hit two superbly timed fours and stood his ground when a lifter from Andy Caddick brought an appeal for a catch behind. Yorkshire were still 58 for 1 in the 13th over when Martyn Moxon, who had just taken 16 off one over from

Kevin Shine, went back to fend off a bumper that hit his left shoulder, and trod on his stumps.

Michael Bevan took three more boundaries off Shine before he lazily glided Batty to backward point. As Anthony McGrath walked in to bat, the man from the Times intoned: "I have yet to see him play an innings." McGrath duly cut the first ball he received into slip's hands.

Once Craig White had joined David Byas, Yorkshire prospered. The captain, on his home ground, made 88 in a fashion that epitomised his strength that determination – at least four of his 16 boundaries were scored by forcing the ball from

outside his off stump through mid-on.

Byas added 57 with Craig White and 56 with Richard Blakey before being seventh out, bowled round his legs, while trying to move the ball to the onside. At that point Somerset were still hoping for a substantial lead but Darren Gough, swinging lustily, and then Chris Silverwood narrowed the deficit until Silverwood was last out flashing with a third bonus point eight runs away.

Caddick was the pick of the Somerset bowling, using the conditions with skill, and he was well supported by Graham Rose. The second-string howling was, however, less impressive.

Whitaker fights back

A courageous half-century from their captain, James Whitaker, and an unbeaten 71 from the wicketkeeper Paul Nixon hauled Leicestershire out of trouble at Grace Road.

The all-seam attack of Sussex had the home side reeling at 177 for 7, with Whitaker seemingly retired hurt with a torn calf muscle after scoring 30. But Nixon led a tail-end recovery and Whitaker hobbled out to bat again as the last man. He was there at the close on 53 not out, with Leicestershire having recovered to reach 258 for 9.

On a pitch of variable bounce, that could prove to be a good score, and Whitaker's decision to bat again might well be the turning point. He and Nixon have already added 33 runs for the last wicket, with Nixon reaching double figures in a home Championship match for the first time this season.

He could hardly have bettered his return to form, and Whitaker's innings typified the fighting spirit Leicestershire have discovered this season. It has taken them to second place in the table, behind Yorkshire.

Sussex's decision to opt for an all-seam attack looked to have paid dividends as the top and middle-order batsmen struggled against some accurate bowling. The left-arm Jason Lewis claimed 4 for 69 and Ed Giddins 5 for 60. Sussex were weakened when Paul Jarvis, having claimed the wicket of Ben Smith, slipped off after eight overs with an ankle injury.

Smyth sweeps into early lead

Golf

The Irishmen Des Smyth and David Feherty, both using broom-handled putters, and Frenchman Jean Van de Velde – who is sticking to orthodox methods – were the early pace-makers during the Sun Dutch Open at Hilversum, the Netherlands, yesterday.

Despite cold and cloudy weather, Smyth leads with a seven-under-par 64 with Feherty and Van de Velde just one shot behind. An eagle three at the final hole gave Smyth his outright lead, but he also had seven birdies on his card as well as two bogeys.

Smyth, 43, and in his 26th season on the European Tour, agreed that the long putter is making him a far more relaxed

player. "For me, using the long putter is stress-free, whereas with the short putter I felt tension in my hands, although I don't know why," he said.

Feherty, too, is now a committed broom-handle disciple, though this is only the third tournament in which he has used it. "Sam [Torrance] gave me the club two weeks ago at the Scottish Open and taught me how to use it," he said. "I just hope the putter doesn't realise it's me that's using it and not him. I'll have to put on a bit of weight and grow a moustache. Sam won't do it for me. I'm not sure, but he's definitely not getting it back."

Feherty had a bogey-free round with six birdies, two of which came with 30th putts and another with a putt from 15 feet.

Van de Velde intends to keep his orthodox putter, despite the success of his rivals. He had eight birdies and two bogeys in his round and said later: "I've used the same putter for 18 months and can't see any reason for using a broom handle. I don't think I'd like it."

While the Frenchman and the Irish duo were setting the pace, Americans Scott Hoch and the 1995 Open champion John Daly were not enjoying themselves.

Hoch, the defending champion, shot a one-under-par 70, but called a round "mediocre". Daly dropped four shots in his first three holes, including a treble-bogey seven at the 344-yard second hole, and, although he improved, finished with a disappointing 75, still four over par.

Three Kent men reach three figures

MIKE CAREY

reports from Derby
Kent 381-5 v Derbyshire

Kent indulged themselves on a good pitch here, as they no doubt expected to do once they had overcome a few early problems. Carl Hooper, Matthew Fleming and the unbeaten Nigel Long all made centuries off an attack that, for all its perseverance, had its lack of variety somewhat exposed.

Ed Smith, a 19-year-old Cambridge undergraduate, made an equally important if less glamorous contribution on his debut when the going was at

its toughest and Derbyshire were left reeling the odd missed opportunity on a day where bowlers increasingly found no margin for error.

All this happened on a relayed pitch which provided normal characteristics on this ground – and Kent may well have feared the worst when Deane Malcolm, in his first Championship match for a month, took wickets in his first and fourth overs.

The first may have owed something to David Fulton's misjudgement of the line; but the second was a beauty which opened Trevor Ward up before moving late to have him caught

powerfully through the line on his way to three figures.

It took an exceptional ball from Harris, which flew from not much short of a length, to remove Hooper, whereupon Fleming made batting look uncommonly simple in scoring a hundred from only 88 balls, though he should have been caught behind at 86. He could not hide his dismay when he swatted a looser one from Dean Jones to backward point when he should have been thinking of today.

Long made no such error and when he reached 100 from 187 balls, with 14 fours and a six, it was just reward for an innings of great character.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

BRITANNIA ASSURANCE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP Second day of four Worcestershire v Northamptonshire KIDDERMINSTER: Worcestershire (4pts) are 233 for 4 in reply to a first-innings total of 228 by Northamptonshire (29, today: 11.0). Northamptonshire won last. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE – First Innings (Overnight: 294 for 9) D Ripley not out 58 J P Taylor lbw c Church 36 Extras (lb, w, nb) 27 Total (22.1 overs) 328 Falls: 1-53, 2-55, 3-82, 4-93, 5-137, 6-144, 7-145, 8-145, 9-223. Score at 120 overs: 9-323. BOWLING: Shepherd 27-4-81-1; Ellis 15-3-51-0; Lupton 25-6-47-3; Wargworth 43-12-89-4; Moody 4-0-17-0; Solanki 6-1-21-1; Church 2-1-0-6-1. Worcestershire – First Innings W P C Weston c Fordham b Snape 68 M J Church b Cape 65 T S Curtis c Montgomery b Roberts 2 K R Spink hit wicket b Snape 0 V S Solanki not out 66 Extras (lb, nb, nb) 13 Total (for 4, 88 overs) 313 To Bat: 1-28, 2-118, 3-185, 4-186. To Bat: 15 J Rhodes, S R Lampard, R K Wargworth, S W K Ellis, A Shepherd.	YORKSHIRE v Somerset SCARBOROUGH: Somerset (7pts), with seven second-innings wickets standing, are runs Yorkshire (29, today: 11.0). Yorkshire won last. YORKSHIRE – First Innings M D Mason hit wicket b Shine 24 D P Vaughan c Turner b Rose 88 D Blythe b Giddins 0 M G Brown c Rose b Batty 19 A McGrath c Lee b Batty 28 C White c Turner b Caddick 21 J R Blakey c Turner b Caddick 109 P J Harkley b Rose 10 C E W Silverwood c Turner b Shine 15 R D Stamp not out 28 Extras (lb, w, nb) 22 Total (for 3, 104 overs) 381 Falls: 1-0, 2-14, 3-85, 4-185, 5-377. To Bat: N W Priest, S A Marsh, M J McGlashan, D W Headley. BOWLING: Caddick 24-5-81-2; Rose 15-5-53-2; Snape 7-3-1-55-3; Lee 17-4-49-1; Batty 15-2-53-2. SOMERSET – Second Innings M N Lattwell not out 37	DERBYSHIRE : N J Barnett, G A Khan, C J Adams, D M Jones, T J G O'Gorman, C M Wells, K M Kniven, P A J Devereaux, M J Vandura, J Hams, D E Malcolm. Umpires: M J Kitchin and J H Hampshire. DURHAM v Essex HARTLEPOOL: Durham (4pts) are 8 for 0 in reply to a first-innings total of 334 by Essex (3, today: 11.0). Essex won last. DERBYSHIRE – First Innings G A Gooch lbw b Kileen 22 D J Robinson c Campbell b Cox 38 A P Grayson c Roseberry b Kileen 74 S G Law c Legumwood b Wood 73 P J Pinchard c Hutton b Kileen 9 R C Irani lbw b Wood 1 R J Robinson b Wood 17 M C Watt c Wood b Kileen 53 N F Williams c Roseberry b Cox 23 S J W Andrew c Campbell b Cox 1 Extras (lb, w, nb) 19 Total (for 3, 109 overs) 339 Falls: 1-53, 2-93, 3-165, 4-165, 5-256, 6-260, 7-281, 8-312, 9-332. BOWLING: Wood 21-4-89-3; Sappers 12-0-69-0; Kileen 21-6-97-4; Roseberry 7-3-22-0; Cox 33-4-14-83-3. DURHAM – First Innings S L Campbell not out 6 S Hutton not out 1 Extras (lb) 1 Total (for 0, 3 overs) 8	GLoucestershire won last GLoucestershire – First Innings N J Trewin c Burns b Small 6 M G N Windward not out 57 T H C Hancock c Burns b Small 69 M A Lynch c Pollock b Small 14 R P Davis not out 14 Extras (lb, w, nb) 23 Total (for 3, 105 overs) 331 Falls: 1-18, 2-166, 3-306. To Bat: A Symonds, M B Ailsworth, R C Williams, M C J Ball, A M Smith, C A Walsh. GLoucestershire won last GLoucestershire – First Innings S P James b Crapple 18 H Morris c Hogg b Maran 71 G P Butcher c Hogg b Watkinson 35 M P Maynard not out 17 P A Cotter not out 137 Extras (lb, w, nb) 14 Total (for 3, 109 overs) 359 Falls: 1-38, 2-100, 3-166. To Bat: R D B Cricht, O O Gibson, I A D Snare, D A Cosh, S L Walwyn, S R Barwick. BOWLING : Chappell 21-3-88-1; Maran 18-6-58-1; Gullan 14-5-51-0; Austin 12-3-35-0; Needy 26-5-64-0; Watkinson 17-3-49-1. LANCASHIRE : J E R Galkin, S P Tizzard, J P Crawley, N J Speck, G D Lloyd, M Wankar, W H Hogg, I D Aislin, G Chapell, P J Maran, G Needy. GLoucestershire v Warwickshire CHILTERNHAM : Gloucestershire (3pts) are 331 for 3 in their first innings against Warwickshire (2, today: 11.0).	S D Udal not out 19 R J Mars not out 7 Extras (lb, w, nb) 35 Total (for 7, 104 overs) 332 Falls: 1-13, 2-128, 3-137, 4-213, 5-235, 6-291, 7-304. To Bat: S M Milburn, J N B Bonill. BOWLING : M P Bicknell 18-3-49-3; Benjamin 17-3-61-0; Hollis 19-5-34-1; Julian 15-1-11-0; Pearson 29-3-80-2; J Bicknell 4-1-18-0; Shahid 2-0-4-0. SURREY : D J Bicknell, M A Boucher, J D Ratcliffe, A D Brown, A J Hollis, Nagesh Shahid, B P Lujan, G J Kerses, M P Bicknell, J E Benjamin, R M Pearson. Umpires: V A Holder and A G T Whitehead. Leicestershire v Sussex LEICESTERSHIRE : Leicestershire are 258 for 9 in their first innings against Sussex. Today: 11.0. Leicestershire won last Leicestershire – First Innings V J Wells b Levy 7 D L Maddy c Moores b Levy 18 B F Smith c Althay b Jarvis 22 P V Summers c Giddins 12 J J Whitaker not out 53 A Habbib b Levy 30 J P A Noon not out 71 D J Mills c Moores b Giddins 23 G J Parsons c Moores b Levy 57 A R K Pearson b Giddins 9	M T Brimmon c Althay b Latham 3 Extras (lb, w, nb) 7 Total (for 8, 104 overs) 258 Falls: 1-16, 2-43, 3-57, 4-86, 5-131, 6-168, 7-177, 8-198, 9-225. BOWLING : Levy 29-6-69-4; Jarvis 8-1-23-1; Giddins 24-5-60-3; Drakes 28-9-76-0; Latham 11-1-32-1; Greenfield 3-1-4-0. SUSSEX : C W J Athey, N J Latham, A P Wells, K Greenfield, M P Speight, J W Hall, E S H Giddins, P Moores, P W Jarvis, C Drakes, J D Levy. Umpires: J H Hams and K J Lyons. MINOR COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP (First of two days): Ashford: Cumberland 240 (M G Scofield 50) Staffordshire 193 (S A Kimberlain School; Cambs 139 (S A Hallett 51, T J A Brown 5-49) and 48 for 0 Bucks 198 for 5 (R B Hurd 105).
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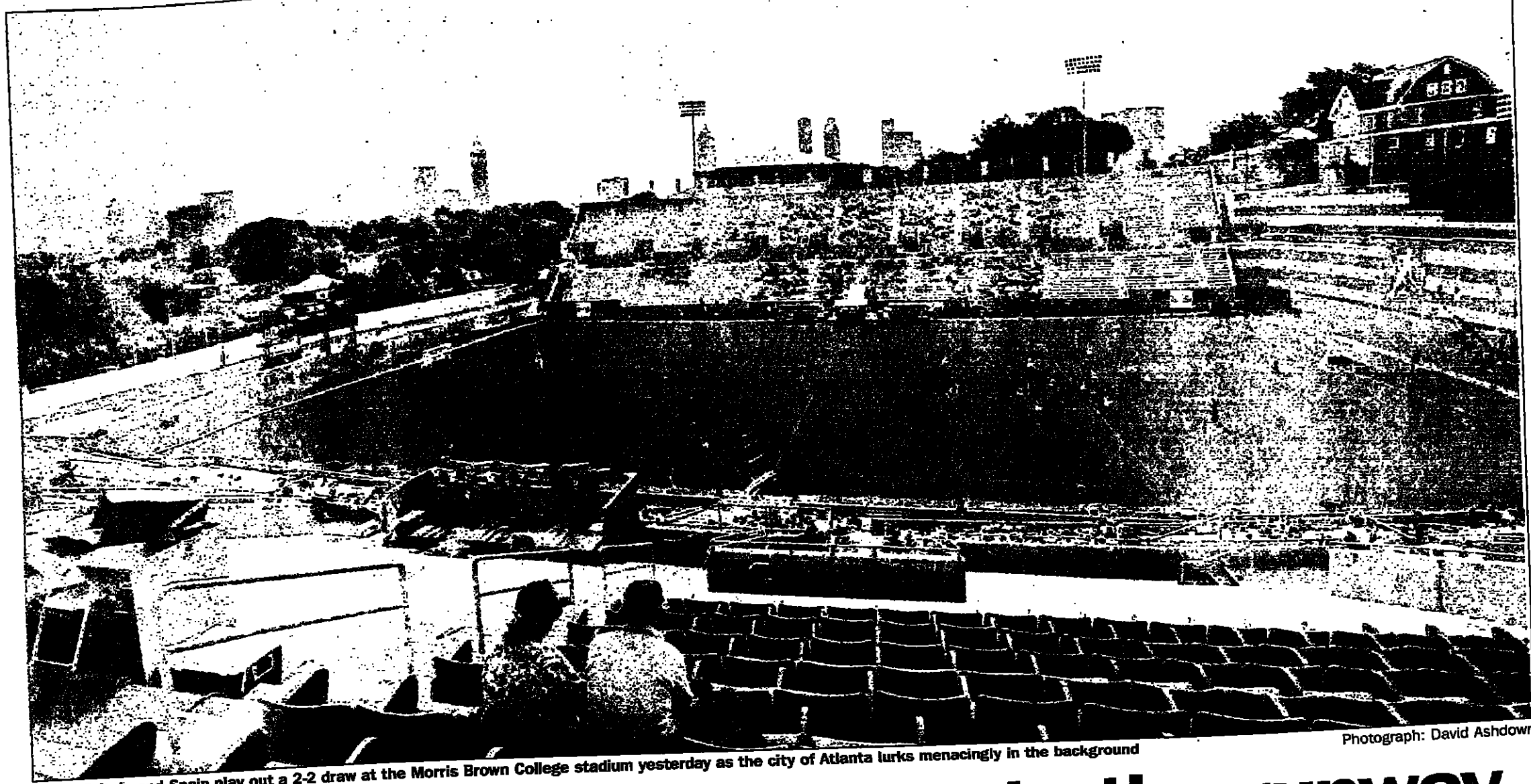
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OLYMPIC GAMES



Great Britain and Spain play out a 2-2 draw at the Morris Brown College stadium yesterday as the city of Atlanta lurks menacingly in the background

Johnson strikes to salvage a point



Great Britain 2 Spain 2

Great Britain's women missed a great opportunity in their fourth game in Atlanta to claim their second successive victory when they were held to a draw by Spain, the defending Olympic champions who, with a dogged display, won their first point of the competition.

Overnight rain and a 9am start gave the players the luxury of a spring-like day with a gentle breeze. The British players opened brightly before falling back into old habits of missing chances and giving away passes before a late rally brought the equaliser.

Scotland's Sue Fraser gave Britain the lead in the 17th minute at their second penalty corner with a low drive. Within five minutes Spain were on terms when their captain, Natalia Dorado, beat Hilary Rose with a similar shot from their second penalty corner.

After Kath Johnson had hit the upright with a powerful drive Spain, always looking dangerous on the break, won a penalty corner through Magore Gabellanes 20 minutes into the second half and although Rose saved well from Dorado, Gabellanes jabbed home in the ensuing scramble.

With the forwards unable to make much impression, it was left to Fraser, coming up from full-back, to win a penalty corner. Her initial shot was blocked by the goalkeeper, but the ball fell to Johnson to sink the equaliser with four minutes remaining.

GRAND PRIX: H. Rose (Scotland), J. Adams (Scotland), S. Fraser (Scotland), K. Brown (Scotland), K. Johnson (Scotland), P. Robertson (Scotland), M. Davies (Scotland), T. Miller (Scotland), J. Macintosh (Scotland), R. Simpson (Scotland), A. Bennett (Scotland), S. Macintosh (Scotland), C. Cook (Scotland).

SPAIN: M. Gonzalez (Spain), S. de la Cruz (Spain), T. Garcia (Spain), C. Garcia (Spain), C. Barco (Spain), L. Lacort (Spain), S. Barco (Spain), M. Fello (Spain), S. Lacort (Spain), L. Lopez (Spain), S. Moragas (Spain), Umpires: R. Chaves (USA), M. Ok Lee (Korea).

Edwards leads Britain on to the runway

The super-fast track of the Centennial Olympic stadium awaits the super-fast athletes of the world today. For many, as the track and field programme gets underway, it will be case of let the Games begin in earnest.

At the end of a week in which British medal success has been almost embarrassingly scant, the most realistic prospect for athletics gold, Jonathan Edwards, summed up the attitude of every striving competitor at the biggest Games in history.

"Winning the Olympics would be the pinnacle of my career, by a long way," he said yesterday. "I know from the feelings inside me arriving here just how much bigger this is than anything else."

His chances of succeeding in that ambition are considerably better than they were a couple of months ago when, as he readily admitted, the pressures of having transformed himself from an ordinary to an extraordinary athlete in one season bore down heavily upon him.

He appeared relaxed and confident yesterday, but warned against the idea that the task he starts today would be as simple as it was in last year's World Championships, when he effectively ended the competition with world records in his first two jumps. "I think it could be a lot closer than that this year," he said.

Kenny Harrison, who won the US trials with a wind-assisted 18.01 metres, Mike Conley, the defending champion, and the Cuban pair of Yoelvis Quesada and Eliczer Urrutia are Edwards' main rivals. But if he can remain in his current, positive state of mind he should win.

That cannot be said for any other Briton. Sally Gunnell's chances of defending her 400m hurdles title appear slight following her heel injury at Lausanne this month. Although her training has since been going well, she has more than a second to make up on her American rivals, Tonja Buford-Bailey and Kim Batten. "I think I've got something I can turn on on the day," Gunnell said. She will have to find something extraordinary.

Fredericks, who took silver in both sprints at the last Olympics, began the season planning to concentrate on the 200 metres but after coming within 0.01sec of Leroy Burrell's world record of 9.85 earlier this month, he changed his mind. "I would have been stupid not to," he said.

The 36-year-old Christie, who has not won a grand prix event this year, appears to have shifted in his attitude to racing. "Since I have been training with Frankie, I'm a lot more laid back and relaxed. Winning isn't everything. Although if people say I'm so relaxed because I have accepted I'm going to lose, to those people I say - hey, you don't know me very well."

Christie removed his sunglasses yesterday to reveal contact lenses bearing the logo of his shoe sponsor - an effort, presumably, to get around the International Olympic Committee rules on advertising in competition. He did not rule out the idea of wearing the lenses while running. Will they enable him to remain focused, one wonders?

Mike Rowbottom looks ahead to the highlights of the athletics programme which begins this afternoon

Linford Christie's chances of retaining his 100m title in tomorrow's final also appear unlikely. Now that his training partner, Frankie Fredericks, has chosen to do the 100 as well as the 200 metres, Christie, who has won the 100m and 200m titles at the last Olympics, are left facing an enormous challenge.

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Fredericks is one of a group of elite athletes seeking a golden double at these Games. Of the other contenders, Michael Johnson (200m and 400m), Haile Gebrselassie (5,000m and 10,000m), Sonia O'Sullivan (1500m and 5,000m) and Wang Jinxia (5,000m and 10,000m), the best chances appear to lie with Johnson and Gebrselassie.

The Ethiopian, who set staggering world records at both his favoured events in 1995, may receive his strongest challenge in the 5,000m, where Salah Hissou of Algeria and Daniel Komen have this year run to within six and seven seconds respectively of the world record mark of 12min 44.39sec.

Johnson, for whom the athletics programme was shifted in order to increase his chances of success in both events, probably bears more pressure than any other athlete at these Games. He is expected to match his World Championship double of last season on home soil for God, America and prime-time TV. Not necessarily in that order.

In the circumstances, he is impressively relaxed. "Doing the 400 at the Olympic trials was probably a tougher race than I'll have at the Olympics," Johnson said. "Events may prove me wrong later, but I feel like we have the best 400 metres runners in the world and I had to race against seven of them at the US trials. In the 200 it's a different story, because two of the best runners come from outside the US."

Wang prepared for long-running show

As if the heat and humidity of Atlanta were not already daunting enough for the distance runners, double world record-holder, Wang Jun Xia of China, is preparing to run four races in five days. That is assuming she gets through the heats of both the 5,000m and 10,000 metres today and tomorrow. But, as the outstanding world record holder for the 3,000 and 10,000m, that should not be a problem.

Wang, who shattered those records in 1993 after winning the world 10,000m title in Stuttgart, was a member of the squad coached by the now infamous Ma Junren. But Wang and most of her colleagues left the coach two years ago, accusing him of tyrannical behaviour and of withholding their prize-money and grants.

Wang trained by herself for a year without anything like the

record. Her 5,000m time of 14:51.87 ranks her fifth.

On arrival three days ago, she confirmed that she was intending to race at both 5,000m and 10,000m. But she did add the proviso that if the 5,000m heats, which take place today, proved too strong, then she might consider avoiding the longer distance, despite being favourite for the title. The 10,000m heats take place tomorrow evening, and

the 5,000m final is on Sunday.

Wang has been training for almost three months at 2,900m altitude in the town of Tuo Pa in Tsing Hai province. Wang named Ireland's Sonia O'Sullivan and the world record holder, Fernanda Ribeiro, of Portugal as favourites for the 5,000m, and the reigning Olympic champion, Derartu Tulu, of Ethiopia as her main opponent for the longer race.

Pat Butcher on a tough schedule for a Chinese athlete

results she achieved under Ma, but for the last 10 months, she has been coached by Mao Tse Zhen. She has the fastest time of the year for 10,000m, 31min 1.76sec, albeit one and a half minutes slower than her world

Capobianco allowed to compete

The Australian sprinter Dean Capobianco and Italian high jumper Antonella Bevilacqua will compete at the Games despite positive drug tests.

The International Amateur Athletic Federation decided at a meeting of its council to put the cases to arbitration and let the athletes compete in Atlanta. The arbitration panel is normally not able to sit for at least three months.

If the IAAF arbitration panel decides the athletes should be banned, their results at the Olympics will be annulled.

Capobianco tested positive for the steroid stanozolol at a meeting in the Dutch town of Hengelo last May but an Australian athletics appeals tribunal ruled against a compulsory four-year ban, saying there were serious flaws in testing procedures.

Bevilacqua, one of the top six jumpers in the world this year, was caught twice with the banned stimulant ephedrine in her body in May. But an Italian panel decided she had taken the drug by mistake.

Early exit for Hingis

The unheralded Japanese Ai Sugiyama provided an early upset when she beat Martina Hingis in straight sets in the second round of the women's singles. Sugiyama, ranked 24th in the world, won 6-4, 6-4. Hingis, 15, the 15th seed, held a 3-0 lead in the second set but the 21-year-old Sugiyama came back strongly, moving well and hitting winners beyond the reach of even the fleet-footed Hingis.

The teenager's Olympic hopes now rest with the doubles competition and she hopes to win at least a round to enable her to stay on to watch the equestrian competition, her other favourite sport.

"I have seen the dressage but I would also like to see the jumping so I hope we can stay one more day," said Hingis, a keen horsewoman herself. "If we lose, I go home."

Hingis, Czech by birth but now a Swiss national, won the Wimbledon women's doubles title last month with Helena Sukova but says the Olympic experience is quite different.

"The opening ceremony is something different you don't have at the French Open or Wimbledon," she said.

On her defeat, Hingis said her opponent was too quick and too unpredictable on the backhand. "You could never tell if it would come down the line or crosscourt," she said.

OLYMPIC GAMES

TODAY'S NUMBER

11

The British judo fighters who have been eliminated without claiming a medal. With one day of competition remaining, Britain has two chances left in a sport which had produced 15 medals in the previous six Olympics.

SCARLET FACES IN ATLANTA

Yesterday's Olympic bloomers

No one likes being taken for a ride and five members of the Armenian weightlifting team put their collective muscle to use when a lady of the night failed to come up with the goods.

The eager lifters gave the woman \$100 in return for an address where she would meet them. However, when the men got there the door was locked and they tried to barge their way in.

Sadly, the show of force attracted the attention of the Atlanta police, who slapped on the cuffs. Disgrace loomed, but the five were released from custody at 7am when the woman proved more accommodating on the clemency front than she did with her favours and refused to press charges.

Two Spanish athletes, who were the worse for wear, were not so lucky. Arrested for indecent exposure they ended up in Fulton County Jail.

Redgrave and Pinsent cruise into final

The British team at last made things go their way when three boats forced through to Olympic finals. Each crew had to come from behind, and Guin Batten had to take out the Olympic champion, Elizabeth Lipa, to do it in the women's single sculls.

For the reigning champions in pairs, Steven Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent, the semi-final is the biggest banana skin of any campaign, even for a crew with 57 victories behind them in the last four years.

The United States pair, coached for most of the year by Mike Spracklen who took Redgrave to his first two Olympic

golds, gave the home crowd a thrill by leading to half-way but a 10-stroke flourish put the British in front and then cruised home watching the scrap for the other two qualifying places. Redgrave goes into his fifth Olympic final on Saturday, seeking his fourth successive gold.

The men's coxless four with the Searle brothers, also Olympic champions, in the mid-

dle of the boat, was tested in the first 500m but found a sharp, light, attacking rhythm in the middle 1,000m of the race and moved into the lead after half-way and led Romania and Slovenia over the line in aggressive style, satisfied that Italy, the favourites had been beaten by France in the other semi-final.

Guin Batten was six seconds behind Lipa in the first quarter but the gap did not increase in the second 500m. The Dane Trine Hansen began to attack Lipa for the lead while Batten rating 33's strokes to the minute was creeping up in lane one. The gentle head breeze suited

the former shot-putter and Lipa, 31, began to look ragged. With 500m to go, Ruth Davidson of the United States also began to struggle and Batten, one length behind, had a target. She raised her rate once again and although Davidon recovered, Lipa was collapsing and when Batten caught her 100m from the finish, her reign was over.

Peter Haining, the Loch Lomond lightweight sculler who thrilled the crowd by pulling himself into the top dozen of the open weights never got into his semi-final race. "Three races if four days is just too much for a man my size," he said.

Tait calms nerves to rise to the occasion

In the individual three-day event endurance test, the former World champion, Blyth Tait of New Zealand, gave the day's outstanding performance. Riding Ready Teddy, the least experienced horse competing and, at eight, probably the youngest, they rose to the occasion, standing first before today's show jumping stage. They are less than a single show jumping error ahead of compatriot Sally Clark on Squirrel Hill, with America's Kelly Milliken third on Out And About.

"I was nervous today for the horse's sake," said Tait. "I hold

him in the highest esteem and now even higher."

Ready Teddy showed his greenness in places, especially at the water fences. "I thought I was a gonner at the first one," he said. "But I dropped the reins and he did it on his own. He's almost too brave, with a heart of gold."

Tait showed his class, using all

his skill to give the horse confidence and placing him perfectly at every obstacle.


Once again, it was not Britain's day. Mary King, the clear leader after the dressage, ran into trouble at the ninth fence when King William jumped to his left at the first part. "I pulled him round and overcorrected him, he was baffled and by the last part he just couldn't jump it - the first time he's ever stopped." It was their only mistake and they went round with 26.40 penalties. "It's such a shame. I feel I've let everyone down," she said.

Chris Hunnable and Mr Beattie belied their comparative inexperience with a fine round, but Hunnable was disappointed that his 32 time penalties leave him down in 9th place. He is 2.8 points Charlotte Batho, Britain's third individual, who produced a stirring cross country round on the Cool Customer only for the horse to break down on his left foreleg between the last two fences. He bravely clambered over the last jump and walked through the finish, but they will not reappear at this morning's veterinary inspection.

Panasonic

Official Worldwide Sponsor 1996 Olympic Games





YESTERDAY IN ATLANTA

Rendle's early exit deepens the gloom

Out of the shadows: Vitaly Scherbo, of Belarus, executes a ring exercise on his way to the bronze medal in the men's combined gymnastics competition. Photograph: AP

Noodle power lifts Zhan

Klees shoots
Germany
to first gold

Flessel leads
France to
team triumph

Shooting

Christian Klees of Germany set a world record score of 704.8 points yesterday to win the gold medal in the men's 50-metre free rifle prone shooting event. It was Germany's first gold medal of the Atlanta Games, following a flurry of silver and bronzes. Sergei Belashov of Kazakhstan won the silver with 703.5 while The bronze went to Jozsef Gombi of Slovakia with 701.9.

Fencing

France moved ahead in the fencing medal stakes on Wednesday as they pushed Italy into second place in the women's épée team event, writes Graham Morrison.

The match seemed evenly-balanced at first but by the halfway stage France had gained the upper hand as Laura Flessel, the new individual champion, fought her relay against Elisa Ugo. Italy came back as

Klees, 28, did not score lower than a 10.2 in his 10 shots in the finals. His trial, including a world record, equalling perfect score of 600 in the preliminary round, broke the previous mark of 703.5 by Jens Harnskog of Denmark in 1991.

In free rifle prone, athletes lie on their stomachs and shoot 22 calibre rifles at bull's-eye targets 50 metres away. The target's centre is 10.4mm wide - smaller than a thumb-nail.

"I can't truly believe it," the ecstatic Klees said. "I train just as much as Boris Becker, but earn less."

Laura Chiesa took up the fight, but Italy were unable to hold France and the match ended as Fleissel thrust through Chiesa's defence in the last relay for a deserved 45-33 win. The bronze medal went to Russia as they defeated Hungary is extra time.

In the men's team sabre the gold went to Russia in a match which their opponents, Hungary, never looked like winning - despite a team which on paper seemed strong. Russia took an early lead and never looked back, finishing the match 45-25 ahead.

Ainslie receives boost

Sailing

After a see-saw of emotions, Britain's sailing team was firmly back on track off Savannah yesterday, writes Stuart Alexander

Ainslie had pulled up from 16th to seventh in Wednesday's first race and then, as most of the fleet was sent ashore for the daily afternoon storm, the team continued and he took second. The race, which ran

The threat of a disqualification for Ben Ainslie in his second race, where he had scored a valuable fourth — though temporarily promoted to third — evaporated. The jury denied the protest from the French concerning Ainslie's involvement in a pile-up in which the American Mick Aldrich was disqualified.

The decision is a boost to Ainslie's chances. Although the worst two finishes of the 11 boats are discarded, Ainslie's 27th position in the opening race combined with a disqualification would have put the British hope against the wall. Ainslie was not the only sailor to have the pressure of a protest against him. The Argentine, Juan Carlos Lange, of Argentina, had his win restored from that second race, from which he had earlier been disqualified.

power were back in evidence, having had "a real problem with overheating. My head felt like it was going to explode." That put him fifth overall and within striking distance of the leaders, Stefan Warkalla of Germany, Peer Moenke of Norway and Hans Olsson of Sweden.

Only two sailors, the European singlehanders also had two races and Shirley Robertson made amends for a yellow flag penalty which pushed her down to 18th in the first by winning the breezy second and ending the day in third.

The board sailor Penny Wilson had her 15th in the second race turned into a fifth as the jury agreed she should be compensated for a protest movement supplied by the organizers. She improved from 14th in her first race to fifth in the second to share fourth overall.

TODAY'S TIMETABLE

All times listed are BST

ATHLETICS: (12.00): (m) 20-km walk final; (1.50): (m) and (w) extra-lightweight repechage; (1.50): (m) and (w) extra-lightweight final.

BOWLING: (1300): (m) lightweight double sculls semi-finals; (1300): (w) lightweight double sculls semi-finals; (1340): (m) lightweight coxed fours.

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Noodle

power
ifts Zhan



WEIGHTLIFTING

man Xugang was totally dominant in the lightweight division yesterday, claiming three world records on his way to earning China's second weightlifting gold medal of the Olympics. The world champion hoisted 25 kg in the snatch, and then

th gold already his, he lifted record 195kg in the clean-and-jerk, setting a new combined mark of 357.5kg into the bargain. North Korea's Kim Myong-mn, who had set the previous records in April, was outlifted by a hefty 12.5 kg and had to settle for silver. Hungary's Attila Gábor took bronze.

China's weightlifting coach Hanxiang, put the success down to instant noodles. "Training is as much as I can do," he snatched, but in the clean and jerk I can do five kilograms more," said Zhan, ominously for his rivals. "I'd been doing well in training and I thought this was my time to take all Kim's records and the gold."

The result was confirmation that China, who did not win a weightlifting gold in 1988 or 1992, is a force to be reckoned with in the lighter weights. Tan

ngsheng took gold in the bantamweight (54kg) class on Sunday with a world record combined total and China have also won a silver and a bronze in Turkey, with two golds so far. It was a bad day yesterday. Their world silver medalist and 1996 champion, Fedai Guler, injured his elbow in the warm-up and

Andrew, the double world champion medalist Ergun Batmaz, trailing badly after the start, declined a third clean catch-and-jerk attempt.

7.68; 7 S Richardson (Can) 8:52.81; 8 M B
Ske (Maced) 8:57.52. Heat 4: 1 Lin Chi-Cha

	United States	4-02.8
(3-4)	Soviet Union	3-05.9
	China	4-07.3

Tennis

Men's Singles First round (prefix denotes seeding):

(1)	R. Foulkes (GB) bt.	N. Pietrangeli (IT)	6-4, 6-3
(2)	A. Panatta (ITA) bt.	P. Schmetz (FR)	6-3, 6-4
(3)	J. Newcombe (GB) bt.	M. Orantes (ESP)	6-4, 6-3
(4)	C. Pasarell (USA) bt.	F. Panatta (ITA)	6-4, 6-3
(5)	D. McNeill (AUS) bt.	G. Sanguinetti (ARG)	6-4, 6-3
(6)	B. Mottram (GB) bt.	H. Garmasse (GER)	6-4, 6-3
(7)	P. Flanger (FR)	A. Panatta (ITA)	6-4, 6-3
(8)	V. Zismandis (LAT) bt.	L. Rostagno (ARG)	6-4, 6-3
(9)	E. Horacio (URU) bt.	P. Schmetz (FR)	6-4, 6-3
(10)	H. Hedges (GB) bt.	E. Panatta (ITA)	6-4, 6-3
(11)	D. Evans (GB) bt.	G. Sanguinetti (ARG)	6-4, 6-3
(12)	V. Zismandis (LAT) bt.	L. Rostagno (ARG)	6-4, 6-3

[illegible]

Volleyball
 PRELIMINARY ROUND GROUP A: CHINA

Water Polo
Preliminary round Group A: Hungary 12, Spain 8, Russia 6, Netherlands 6, Germany 3, Canada 0, Brazil 3, Russia 0.

PLAY INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL

REGISTRATION STARTS WEDNESDAY

28

SPORT



FIRST TEST: Pakistan surrender initiative after Inzamam powers them into commanding position with century on docile pitch

England swing balance with 'new' ball

DEREK PRINGLE
reports from Lord's
Pakistan 290-9 v England

The intrigue may at last be waning in the High Court, with Imran Khan admitting part of the libel action brought against him, but it was building up at Lord's, where England's fortunes fluctuated like a deflating balloon. Once Inzamam-ul-Haq had gone to a standing ovation and a first-best score of 148, the threat of a big total receded and England ended the day in decent shape with nine Pakistan wickets accounted for.

However, no Test match against Pakistan is complete without a speck of controversy and Inzamam - on 64 at the time - ought to have been the man given out when he was involved in a mix-up with his team-mate Salim Malik.

Having completed a first run, Salim, the non-striker, set off for a second, which was probably there despite Ian Salisbury's brilliant sliding stop and throw.

Inzamam, strangely mute considering he briefly left his ground at the bowler's end, later claimed he shouted "Wait". But if that call was made, it wasn't heard by the advancing Salim, who was first to touch his bat down in the crease. All the while a nonplussed Jack Russell casually removed the balls at the other end, which had by now been vacated by both batsmen.

In fact, neither man was officially given out and Salim walked, taking the long trudge back to the dressing-room as slowly and accusingly as he could. If it was a sacrifice, television replays showed it to have been in error.

Test cricket is more about results and less about the methods of achieving them, and for

that England will be thankful. On a docile pitch, very different to the one England played India on here a month ago, England's bowlers struggled to produce anything remotely resembling a wicket-taking ball until after tea, when the umpires changed a "horribly misshapen" ball, and its replacement began to swing.

At that stage, Pakistan were 197 for 4 and handily placed to bat England out of the game. Instead they capitulated, losing five wickets for 93 runs as England began to get the ball off the straight for the first time in the day. A moment David Lloyd, the England coach, later acknowledged as an important one. "That ball change just shows the mysteries of swing bowling," he said later.

And swing it surely did with Dominic Cork at last being able to persuade umpire Peter Willey to give the 18-year-old debutant Shadab Kabir out lbw, a decision he also upheld when Mark Ealham later inquired, after a perfect in-swinging had caught Wasim Akram plumb in front.

Alan Mullally, who had been England's best bowler in the series, then stepped in to take three quick wickets, including the prize scalp of Inzamam, now tiring and bowled off an inside edge.

Inzamam, whose talent has been widely touted, first burst into prominence during the 1992 World Cup, where his scorching semi-final blitz against New Zealand took his team to the final when defeat had looked likely.

Tall and bulky, despite a recent weight loss of 26lb, there is a lack of elegance to his play that stems from a dominant right hand and an early commitment to the front foot. But although his cover drives are slapped rather than struck, the power is

there and he never missed out on anything wayward, finding the gaps with precision.

Hailing from the dusty town of Multan, famous for its pottery and handicrafts, Inzamam, now 26, struggled on Pakistan's last tour of England, where he averaged 13 over the four Tests he played.

Like many of his countrymen, he has a natural affinity for the on-side. But if that led to his downfall four years ago, an extension of his off-side repertoire has meant a reduction in the amount of balls worked to leg - a risky proposition unless at the peak of your game and he was twice reprimanded, on 63 and 132, to difficult half-chances.

He does not lack confidence, and showed few nerves when belting Graeme Hick for six over the fielder stationed at long-on to bring up his hundred. "Twice I have got out on 95," he explained. "So when I thought it was a good ball to hit, I did. It is a great honour for me to score a century at Lord's."

Apart from Inzamam, only Saeed Anwar, with a stylish 74, got the kind of score Wasim would have been looking for from his top order, although even he was out to a careless slash off Hick.

Having won the toss and batted, Pakistan gifted their early wickets England's way with Aamir Sohail starting the trend as he padded away a straight one from Simon Brown. It was the Durham bowler's 10th ball in Test cricket and he registered 76mph on the Wilkinson Sniper speedgun. Several miles per hour slower than the raising of umpire Steve Bucknor's finger as it sent Aamir on his way.

But if that dismissal could be put down to carelessness, the next should be consigned to The X-files. Few could have guessed what game Ijaz Ahmed was playing, but his dismissal looked like it had come from a primitive form of hopscotch, rather than a cricket manual.

Having scratched about for his one run, he then decided to run across his stumps to a straight ball from Cork, almost tripping over as he tried to get his bat out from behind his back pad, as a perfectly straight ball bowled him behind his legs.

It was certainly a bizarre start to a day of lost opportunities for Pakistan, who but for Inzamam could have been in very poor shape indeed - a position their bowlers may find hard to overcome.



Dominic Cork uproots the middle stump to take the wicket of Ijaz Ahmed at Lord's yesterday Photograph: Peter Jay

Atherton's risk-taking rewarded

HENRY BLOFELD

Mike Atherton's captaincy is competent rather than brilliant. He polices the progress of the game in an organised manner but can seldom be accused of having altered its course with sudden and unexpected tactical decisions. At times he has seemed too inflexible.

In the early afternoon England were in a difficult situation. On a slow, flat pitch two batsmen, Inzamam-ul-Haq and Saeed Anwar, had put on 130 and were not in the slightest difficulty against any of the bowlers. Pakistan were heading for a big total. It was then that Atherton suddenly threw the ball to Graeme Hick, who is nowadays little more than an occasional off-spinner, preferring to use him rather than his one specialist spinner, Ian Salisbury, who had already bowled four overs for 18 runs before lunch.

Hick's first two balls had Inzamam in a tangle. He came down the pitch to the first but did not quite get to the pitch of the ball and had to fall back on an improvised, crab-like defensive stroke. He pushed out to the second and it flew off his pad to slip, before turning the third to square leg for a single. His fourth ball to Saeed Anwar was short. Saeed could hardly believe his luck and, making room for himself, played a wild square cut. But the ball turned away from the left-hander, it found the edge, and he was caught behind.

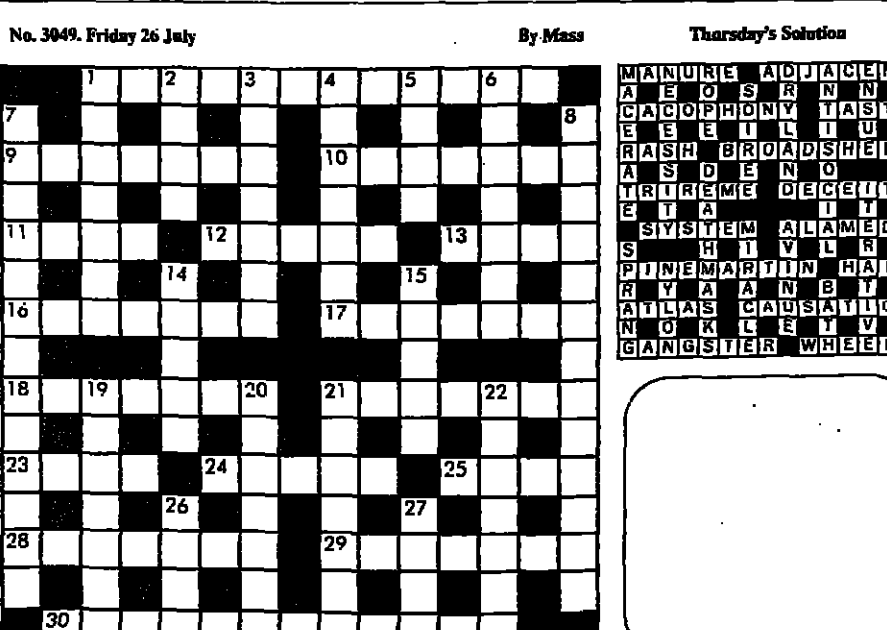
Atherton had backed a hunch and it had worked. Another unusual aspect of the affair was that Atherton, who often seems deeply suspicious of spin, had, in a moment of need, turned to a spinner. One can only hope that the success of this inspiration will come to make him more flexible and more inclined to take a similar chance in the future.

This incident also showed the importance of having a bowler in your side who, in normal circumstances, you would not be expected to call upon but who, in a situation like this, is well worth an over or two.

Lord's scoreboard

Pakistan men's test	England men's test
1st Innings	1st Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
2nd Innings	2nd Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
3rd Innings	3rd Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
4th Innings	4th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
5th Innings	5th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
6th Innings	6th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
7th Innings	7th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
8th Innings	8th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
9th Innings	9th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
10th Innings	10th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
11th Innings	11th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
12th Innings	12th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
13th Innings	13th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
14th Innings	14th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
15th Innings	15th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
16th Innings	16th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
17th Innings	17th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
18th Innings	18th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
19th Innings	19th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
20th Innings	20th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
21st Innings	21st Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
22nd Innings	22nd Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
23rd Innings	23rd Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
24th Innings	24th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
25th Innings	25th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
26th Innings	26th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
27th Innings	27th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
28th Innings	28th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
29th Innings	29th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs
30th Innings	30th Innings
133 runs, 14 overs	133 runs, 14 overs

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1 Garments primarily among diners, with seven scheduled? (7-5)
 - 2 Released 'New Deal' in America (7)
 - 3 Bill gets vulgar, we hear, causing a scene (7)
 - 4 Rough hour in boat (4)
 - 5 Milky product from the States (5)
 - 6 A fish native to our shores (4)
 - 7 Skin gashed on rocks bordering lake (7)
 - 8 Violent sort of comic (5-2)
 - 9 Irresolute officer's picked up, working (7)
 - 10 Chops up vegetables audibly (7)
 - 11 Advocate's thirst (4)
 - 12 Fair aspect from Southern section of palace? (5)
 - 13 Swarming naturally includes one? (4)
 - 14 A figure is entered backwards, like a fool (7)
 - 15 Tripe is brought in, adding to dish (7)
 - 16 On cryptics, he solved with brilliant displays (12)
 - 17 Tax is void (7)
 - 18 Spans (measures of horse on sale) (4)
 - 19 Pains he treated, ending up thus? (2-5)
 - 20 Irresolute officer's picked up, shot in the dark outside (7)
 - 21 Strokes affording catches (4)
 - 22 Jabbed with alacrity, grabbing one run (7)
 - 23 Like a wide boy when it comes to customs? (13)
 - 24 A very touching arrangement (13)
 - 25 Ice-cream server's large profit (5)
 - 26 Make up time after cramp (5)
 - 27 Boost for publication if printed in New York (7)
 - 28 Present? Present? Obviously not! (7)
 - 29 Edward II advanced into the Borderland? (7)
 - 30 Dressing infused with cold American medication (7)
 - 31 Bone up on nameless writer (4)
 - 32 A drink like cha, it's said (4)

THE FRANKLIN SCRAMBLE Make the longest word you can from (NOTES) Thursday's Scramble: GYMNASIUM

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Redgrave and Pinsent play it cool into final

Ken Jones watches Britain's leading oarsmen stay on course for gold

An enterprise that raises a great deal of anticipation in British circles is the renewed Olympic effort Steven Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent are putting in at Lake Lanier some 70 miles from Atlanta.

On a surprisingly cool morning that came as a godsend to the early starters, the sun screened by grey clouds that hung low over the verdant surroundings, the British pair steadily made up ground on still water to reach tomorrow's final of the coxed pairs.

Since Redgrave and Pinsent are considered likely to reprise the gold medal they won in Barcelona four years ago, first place in a semi-final ahead of New Zealand and Italy did not surprise any of the three or four thousand spectators present.

What did cause some slight concern however was a winning time of 6min 50.30sec, almost four seconds slower than that posted by Australia in the first semi-final a short while earlier.

Whether this indicated an error in pacing by the British was not known, but more than three-quarters of the 2,000-metre course had been covered before daylight appeared between them and second placed New Zealand.

An impression held here is that in matters of pace and stamina rowers perform roughly in the manner of racehorses. It is not so much that they seek surges in acceleration as the energy to sustain maximum momentum.

Employing a stroke rate that would bring a scathing comment from Redgrave, the US pair, Michael Petersen and Jonathan Holland, were a full length in front at the half-way stage but fell away badly, finishing fourth. "If a crew wants to race like nutters at the beginning, and end up in a B final it is up to them," Redgrave said.



Easy victory: Redgrave and Pinsent yesterday

"I'm not an educated man," he said. "I don't understand the word."

Of course, long experience (they won every race they entered between Barcelona and Atlanta) had alerted Redgrave and Pinsent to the folly of premature effort. "Australia and France are our main opposition," Redgrave said, "but we know that the USA and New Zealand had real potential. If we'd been sucked in by the US, we'd have ended up in the B final ourselves. The Americans were fast enough to be in the final but they paced it badly."

News that Michael Holland collapsed after the race and was

This led to a spat between Redgrave and an American reporter who raised the thorny issue of transportation in Atlanta in which the British rowers became involved earlier this week when they moved into a hotel close to the rowing course after complaining about difficulties in arriving on time.

When the American then asked Redgrave if he considered the American tactics precipitous, he became aggressive.

Further encouragement for the British team came when the Searle brothers, Greg and Jonny, along with Rupert Obholzer and Tim Foster easily won their semi-final in the coxed fours.

By the time the British crew went off conditions had changed marginally, the temperature higher, sun glinting on the water and bearing down on a full grandstand. Comfortably in charge of proceedings after 500 metres, they came in ahead of Romania and Slovenia, firmly established among the favourites.

Apparently more Corinthian in approach than Redgrave and Pinsent the coxed four crew are nevertheless among the favourites for tomorrow's final and, in consideration of the knowledge that the Searles were Barcelona gold medallists in the coxed pairs, short, ending all the time.

Guin Batten will be another British boat in the final. Putting in a stout bid she managed third place in the women's single sculls behind Trine Hansen of Denmark and the US representative, Ruth Davidson.

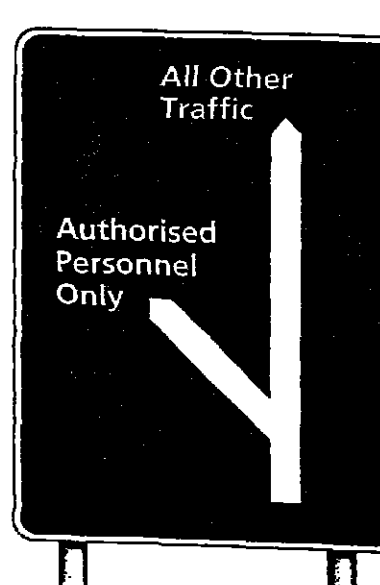
As for Redgrave and Pinsent their focus now is on the challenge expected from the Australian crew, David Weightman and Robb Scott, a comparatively new partnership. "There is a lot at stake for them," Scott said. "We are having a great time and all is going well. We can't wait for the final." They are being taken seriously.

Olympic Games, reports and results, pages 25-27

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